

# public employees have the right to engage in political activity (on their own time)

- Here are some tips:
- Use a non-work email address when organizing political activity or writing to your representatives
  - Organize political activity or write/call your representatives on your own time, not while working
  - Mention your field rather than your specific title and library. For example, you can say “I work in libraries” rather than “I am the youth services librarian at X Branch Library”
  - Each library and type of library may have its own policies in regards to political activity. Check the policies at your library, city, or district to see if any apply to you.

Here are some tips:

- (g) Sign a political petition as an individual;
- (h) Make a financial contribution to a political party or organization;
- (i) Take an active part, in support of a candidate, in an election;
- (j) Be politically active in connection with a question such as a constitutional amendment, referendum, etc.;
- (k) Serve as an election judge or clerk;
- (l) Be a candidate and hold elective office in any nonpartisan election;
- (m) Take an active part in political organization management; and
- (n) Otherwise participate fully in public affairs, except as prohibited by law, in a manner which does not materially compromise the neutrality, efficiency or integrity of the employee's administration of state functions.

Idaho Code 67-5311

- (a) Register and vote in any election;
- (b) Express an opinion as an individual privately and publicly on political subjects and candidates;
- (c) Display a political picture, sticker, badge, or button;
- (d) Participate in the nonpartisan activities of a civic, community, social, labor, or professional organization;
- (e) Be a member of a political party or other political organization and participate in its activities;
- (f) Attend a political convention, rally, or other political gathering;

### Things that are permitted (Idaho Code 74-605):

- A public employee has a first amendment right to political speech, as long as no public funds are used
- A public employee can neutrally encourage voters to vote
- A public employee can personally campaign or advocate for or against a ballot measure, as long as no public funds are used
- A public entity can prepare and distribute objective statements about ballot measures regarding proposed amendments to the state constitution
- A balanced classroom discussion or debate of current or pending election issues

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Resources:

Idaho Code Title 74: Transparent and Ethical Government, Chapter 6: Public Integrity in Elections Act <https://legislature.idaho.gov/statutesrules/idstat/title74/t74ch6/>

Idaho Code 67-5311: Limitation of Political Activity <https://legislature.idaho.gov/statutesrules/idstat/title67/t67ch53/sect67-5311/>

Do you know who your state legislators are? Visit [legislature.idaho.gov/legislators/whoismylegislator](https://legislature.idaho.gov/legislators/whoismylegislator) to find out

Do you know who your congress members are? Visit [congress.gov/members/find-your-member](https://congress.gov/members/find-your-member) to find out



# keeping political activity separate when working in libraries (this is not legal advice)

In Idaho, public employees are not allowed to use their position to advocate for a candidate or ballot measure.

Idaho Code 74-604:

(2) Neither a public entity nor any of its employees shall use, nor shall a public official authorize to use, public property or resources to advocate for or against a candidate or a ballot measure.