



WARREN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



REGULATION 085: POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

EFFECTIVE DATE: 05/01/12

AUTHORITY: SHERIFF NATHAN H. YORK

PRIOR REVISION: 01/01/08

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: 14.3

PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purpose of this regulation is to nurture the respect, confidence, and support of the public we serve by having a policy that affirms our position of neutrality and impartiality in all matters, including those concerning political affiliations, activities, or related issues. The intent is to provide a framework from which our membership can familiarize themselves with official WCSO policy on political activities, and to be fully aware of the direction they are expected to follow in such matters.

DEFINITIONS

"WCSO Member" or "Member" - Shall mean all members in all divisions, part-time or full-time, seasonal or temporary, excluding the Sheriff.

"Political Activities" - Shall include but is not limited to:

- Running for, or being appointed to, a public or political office
- Advocating or opposing, as a member of the Sheriff's Office, any political position, any political candidate or any related issue
- Advocating or opposing, as a member of the Sheriff's Office, any legislative agenda, item, bill or other action of a legislative member or the legislature as a whole

"Political Materials" - Shall include but is not limited to:

- Political bumper stickers, pins, buttons, pens, shirts, hats, coffee mugs, or other similar type novelty items
- Political posters, signs, handouts, palm cards, or other similar type campaign items
- Political nominating petitions, voter registration cards, absentee ballots, or other similar type election related items
- Political fundraiser records, donor lists, admission tickets, or other similar type items
- Political strategy papers, platforms, lists, financial records, or other campaign type papers

"Public Office" - Shall mean an office in which members of the general public cast votes for a person to fill a public or political office, or an office to which a person is appointed by legal authority to hold a public or political office. This definition does not include fire departments, emergency squads, clubs, fraternal associations, or other similar type organizations that do not have any public authority or legislative influence over the public or a public institution.

RUNNING FOR, OR BEING APPOINTED TO, PUBLIC OFFICE

1. No member shall run for a public or political office without the express written approval of the Sheriff. Any such request must be submitted in writing.
2. No member shall hold an appointed public or political office while a member without the express written approval of the Sheriff. Any such request must be submitted in writing.

MEMBER PROHIBITIONS

1. No member shall use the WCSO name, insignia, logo or other identifying characteristics for political activities at any time.
2. No member shall use their rank, title, position, or other WCSO related personal identification for political activities at any time.
3. No member shall use any WCSO equipment, supplies, vehicles, or other property for political activities at any time.
4. No member shall serve as a member, honorary member, officer, or other person on a campaign committee established or created to support the candidacy of a person running for or seeking to be appointed to any public office.
5. No member shall carry, possess, wear or distribute any political materials in any WCSO station or facility or possess them on WCSO property at any time for any purpose. The only exception to this prohibition shall be the affixing of a bumper sticker to a members' personal vehicle.
6. No member shall carry, possess, distribute from, or attach any political materials in or on any WCSO vehicle at any time for any purpose.
7. No member shall identify themselves as a member of WCSO or provide their rank, title or position when submitting editorials, letters to the editor, or any other medium of written materials for print or news media use. This includes paid political ads, whether or not the member pays for the ad.
8. No member shall identify themselves as a member of WCSO or provide their rank, title or position when speaking or appearing on any audio or video media service for the purposes of discussing a political activity without prior written approval of the Sheriff. Any such request must be submitted in writing. This section includes but is not limited to speaking on any radio station as an invited guest or in response to a radio "call in" type show or program.
9. No member shall serve as a moderator or panel member, or in any manner become involved in the organization, management, supervision, or sponsorship of any political debate for candidates seeking public office.
10. No on duty member shall attend any political function, rally, fundraiser or other similar event unless directed to do so by the Administration Office as a part of their official duties as a member of the department.
11. No member shall solicit, collect or receive any money for, any political fund, club, association, society or committee.
12. No member shall prepare, carry, circulate, or assist in the preparation, carrying or circulating of any nominating petitions for public or political office.
13. No member shall use or threaten or attempt to use his official power or authority, in any manner, directly or indirectly, in aid of or against any political candidate, political party organization, association or society, or to control, affect, influence, reward or punish, the political adherence, affiliation, action, expression or opinion of any citizen.
14. No on duty member shall discuss or comment about, in any manner, any political activity, race, or appointment with any other person that is not a member of WCSO. Any such discussions, conversations or comments between members must be conducted in a manner and location where non-agency members will not overhear it.

15. No on duty member shall respond to any inquiry from a citizen or any other person, or initiate any conversation with a citizen or any other person, when the inquiry or conversation concerns a political activity, unless it directly relates to an official agency investigation. If an inquiry is made, members shall advise such citizen or other person that WCSO policy strictly prohibits membership participation in a discussion, dialogue or other communication relative to political activities when on duty.

AUTHORITY AND INTERPRETATION

1. Any question or comment, from any person, relative to this regulation, its contents, intent and purpose, authority, or interpretation shall be directed by all members to the Sheriff.
2. The Sheriff is the sole authority on the content, interpretation and intent of this regulation, and may waive or amplify upon this regulation as necessary to ensure the stated intent and purpose is achieved.