

# Political Activities-Endorsements

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While Mount St. Joseph University encourages faculty, staff and students to participate in the election process as individuals, it is critical that we keep in mind that our not-for-profit status as a 501(c) (3) organization prohibits certain activities to be taken by the University or by an individual or groups whose actions are attributable to the University.

Under the Internal Revenue Code, all section 501(c)(3) organizations are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office. The prohibition applies to all campaigns at the federal, state and local level. Violation of this prohibition may result in denial or revocation of our tax-exempt status and the imposition of certain excise taxes. Section 501(c)(3) organizations may engage in activities to promote voter registration, encourage voter participation, and provide voter education provided that the activity does not favor or oppose any candidate for office.

Faculty and all other employees of the University are entitled and encouraged to participate (or not) off hours, as individuals in the election process provided that your association with Mount Saint Joseph University is not identified. If your association with Mount St. Joseph University does become known, you need to clearly express that your opinions are your own and not those of the University.

Certain activities will require an evaluation of all the facts and circumstances to determine whether they result in political campaign intervention. If you have plans to invite a candidate for public office to campus or to host an election-related activity, please consult with Linda Panzeca, Chief Compliance and Risk Officer, prior to issuing an invitation or arranging the event.

Political campaign intervention includes any and all activities that favor or oppose one or more candidates for public office. The prohibition extends beyond candidate endorsements to include contributions to political campaign funds or public statements of position (verbal or written) made by or on behalf of the University in favor of or in opposition to any candidate for public office, distributing statements prepared by others that favor or oppose any candidate for public office, or allowing a candidate to use the University's assets or facilities if other candidates are not given an equivalent opportunity. Please keep in mind that these prohibitions extend to both the content of the public and inside pages of the University's website as well as links to related and unrelated organizations that encourage, recommend or otherwise urge viewers to use the link to get information about specific candidates and their positions on specific issues.