

# MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY

Policy #:	02-0005				
Name of Policy:	Political Activity Policy				
Date of Last Revision:	February 2024	Initial Date of Approval:	January 2016	Initial Effective Date:	January 2016
Policy Owner	Executive Vice President				
Policy/Chapter Sections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definition</li> <li>Scope</li> </ul> </li> <li>Political Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Activity</li> <li>Contributions</li> <li>Endorsements</li> <li>Materials</li> <li>Campaigning</li> <li>Testimony</li> </ul> </li> <li>Seeking or Holding Public Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General</li> <li>Candidacy</li> <li>Appointment</li> <li>Time Demands</li> </ul> </li> <li>Use of State Facilities for Political Purposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings</li> <li>Fundraising</li> <li>Location</li> </ul> </li> <li>Recognizing Candidates and Elected Officials on Campus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visits</li> <li>Candidates</li> <li>Officials</li> </ul> </li> <li>Voting</li> </ul>				
Date of Next Review:	February 2027				

## 1.0 PURPOSE

Missouri Southern State University actively encourages its employees to exercise their rights as citizens and participate in lawful political activities on behalf of political organizations, parties, and/or candidates. Such activity, like any other personal, non-official undertaking, must be done on the employee's own time and should not interfere with the employee's university duties.

## 2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all University administration, faculty, and staff, and all such parties are expected to abide by the procedural guidelines outlined herein.

### 3.0 POLICY

#### I General Information

*Definition* For the purposes of this policy, “political activity” is defined as endeavors undertaken by Missouri Southern State University faculty and staff not as a part of their employment but in regard to their personal involvement in elections and campaigns for or against candidates, political parties, and ballot initiatives.

*Scope* This policy applies solely to the actions of individual faculty and staff and does not cover: 1) activities of the university; 2) activities of individual students or student organizations, which are governed by the MSSU *Student Handbook*; 3) activities conducted as part of a teaching or research enterprise.

#### II Political Participation

*General* In all areas of participation, an MSSU employee has the responsibility to make clear that he or she is in no way representing the university.

*Activity* An employee of Missouri Southern State University may not engage in political activity while: on duty; in any room or building on campus utilized in the discharge of their official duties; utilizing state resources, including e-mail accounts, phones, letterhead, and/or stationary; wearing an official logo, brand, or insignia of the university; or using any vehicle owned or leased by the institution.

*Contributions* Employees of Missouri Southern State University may contribute or expend personal funds on behalf of political parties, groups, candidates, or issues, subject only to state and federal laws which regulate political contributions.

Pursuant to Missouri Revised Statute, public employees may not make any contribution or expenditure of public funds to advocate, support, or oppose any ballot measure or candidate for public office. Also, university employees may not solicit, accept, or receive a political contribution from any person who is a subordinate employee.

*Endorsement* Missouri Southern employees are free to express opinions speaking or writing as an individual in their personal capacity but not as a representative of the university in any advertisements, electronic communications, or printed materials, including newspaper editorials, in support of or opposition to political parties, candidates, or causes.

It is the employee’s responsibility to make plain that they are acting for themselves and not on behalf of the university. If MSSU employees choose to speak or write in support of or in opposition to a political party, candidate, or cause, they should never be identified as a university employee, are prohibited from utilizing university letterhead or stationery, and may not wear

or displaying the university's logos, brand, or other identifying marks. Such identification, use of official letterhead or stationery, or the presence of branded merchandise constitutes an implied endorsement by the university, which is unacceptable under this policy.

*Materials* The distribution or posting of political advertisements or handbills in or on campus facilities, including residence halls, dining halls, at university events, on parked vehicles, or via university information technology resources, including e-mail accounts, is prohibited.

Employees may wear or display political badges, buttons, or stickers as an expression of personal political opinion.

*Campaigning* Actively campaigning in university facilities, including door-to-door campaigning in residence halls and classroom buildings, is prohibited.

*Testimony* Missouri Southern employees testifying before the Missouri General Assembly on behalf of the university, or an outside entity, shall notify the institution's designated governmental liaison prior to testimony.

### III **Seeking or Holding Public Office**

*General* Subject to the requirements of notice to an employee's supervisor, as well as leave or resignation requirements described below, an employee may, without the university's permission, become a candidate for, or accept appointment to public office.

*Candidacy* Before officially announcing candidacy for any local, county, state, or federal public office, an employee of Missouri Southern State University must inform his/her supervisor of such intention and said supervisor must make that fact known to the university president through appropriate channels as soon as possible. Any MSSU employee seeking election to a full-time office must resign or begin an approved unpaid leave of absence as of the date of filing in the primary.

*Appointment* Before accepting appointment to an elective office (i.e. to fill a vacancy that has occurred in an otherwise elective position), an employee of Missouri Southern State University must inform his/her supervisor of such intention and said supervisor must make that fact known to the university president through appropriate channels as soon as possible. Any MSSU employee accepting appointment to a full-time public office must resign as of the date of appointment.

*Time Demands* No individual shall hold a full-time public office while serving as an employee of Missouri Southern State University. Examples of full-time public office include the executive branch of county, state, or federal government; the legislative branch of state or federal government; or a full-time position in a state or federal agency. Any employee seeking election to such a full-time office must resign or request an approved unpaid leave of

absence as of the date of filing in the primary. Employees elected to or accepting appointment to full-time public office are required to resign their university post upon election or appointment.

Employees seeking election or accepting appointment to part-time public office shall do so only if the required time and attention does not interfere with university duties. Examples of part-time public office include city council, school board, and related committees (i.e. planning and zoning, parks and recreation, etc.). Should an employee, while he or she is serving as a part-time public official, fail to perform all of his/her university duties, such employee shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action or termination.

#### IV Use of State Facilities for Political Purposes

*Meetings* Except as prohibited below, state university facilities may be made available for the purpose of holding political meetings, press conferences, and/or public forums, provided there is no interference with regularly scheduled university activities. At public forums, students shall be permitted to hear the speakers without charge. Payment of facility use fees shall be made at the same rate as charged the general public and be paid in advance of the event or meeting.

*Fundraising* State university facilities and grounds shall not be made available for fundraising events for any political candidate, party, or committee.

*Location* MSSU landmarks, buildings, grounds, mascot, and/or logos shall not be used in political advertisements nor as a location for photographing, filming, or otherwise producing political advertisements or materials. Such use could imply an endorsement by Missouri Southern, which is unacceptable under this policy.

#### V **Recognizing Candidates and Elected Officials on Campus**

*Visits* Campus visits by candidates for public office shall be coordinated through the university's designated governmental liaison to ensure proper and adequate arrangements in accordance with this policy.

*Candidates* Candidates for public office who are not currently holding an elected office shall not be introduced or recognized by the university on campus.

*Officials* Other than the governor, individuals currently holding public office shall not be introduced or recognized on campus unless they are in attendance at a campus event in an official capacity.

#### VI Voting

Employees of Missouri Southern State University are encouraged to register and vote as he or she may choose. Employees are provided leave with pay for up to two hours on primary, general, and special election days.

#### **4.0 HISTORY**

This policy may be revised, edited, changed or removed at any time with or without notice to applicable individuals.

February 2024 – policy placed into new format, minor grammatical corrections.

#### **5.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS**

None