

IRS Employee Suspended for Urging Taxpayers to Reelect President Obama

Cross References

- U.S. Office of Special Counsel News Release, July 10, 2014

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) has announced that an IRS employee has agreed to a 100-day unpaid suspension for violation of the Hatch Act, which prohibits federal employees from running as candidates in partisan elections and from soliciting contributions and promoting candidates for political office while on duty and in the federal workplace. OSC is authorized to investigate allegations of Hatch Act violations, and if possible resolve the matter informally before filing a formal complaint before the Merit Systems Protection Board.

The complaint against the IRS employee alleged that when fielding taxpayers' questions on an IRS customer service help line, the employee repeatedly urged taxpayers to reelect President Obama in 2012 by delivering a chant based on the spelling of the employee's last name. In the settlement agreement resolving the complaint, the IRS employee acknowledged that he had used his authority and influence as an IRS customer service representative for a political purpose and did so while at work.

In another OSC complaint, a U.S. Postal Service (USPS) employee was investigated for running for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives while employed as a USPS worker. OSC and USPS repeatedly warned the worker that his actions violated the Hatch Act and requested that he comply with the law either by withdrawing from the elections or ending his federal employment. Despite these repeated warnings, the employee refused to comply with the law. As a result, his employment with USPS has been terminated.