



Illinois Ethics Matters

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Honesty, Integrity, Service

A newsletter from the Office of Executive Inspector General for the Agencies
of the Illinois Governor

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Announcements

- After receiving appropriations to increase its headcount, the OEIG recently hired additional staff. **Bobby Martinez Olson** and **LaTrice Towns** will serve as Assistant Inspectors General, and **Laura Donahue** and **Sean Gleason** will serve as Investigators. **Roshni Pandey** has joined the office as Complaints & Compliance Project Manager. These five new employees will work out of the OEIG's Chicago office.

Prohibited Political Activity During Campaigns

Particularly during campaign seasons, State employees are reminded of the Ethics Act's prohibitions on political activity. Generally, employees are prohibited from working on or in support of a campaign for elective office while on compensated time or using State resources. 5 ILCS 430/5-15(a) & (b). The Ethics Act also specifically prohibits State employees from soliciting, accepting, or making political contributions on State property at any time. 5 ILCS 430/5-35.

This means that State employees may not, for instance, post on social media in support of a campaign during their workday, regardless of whether they use a personal device or not. In one case, after an OEIG investigation, a State employee was suspended for 30 days by his State agency and fined \$750 by the Executive Ethics Commission (EEC) for using Facebook to make posts about campaign, and local political party, events and supporting a specific political candidate. [Haling v. McMechan, 20-EEC-004](#). The OEIG's investigation revealed that the posts were made during the employee's State compensated time and that the Facebook logins were associated with internet identifiers assigned exclusively to the employee's personal cell phone. Although in his OEIG interview, the employee initially denied making the posts, he acknowledged in the stipulated facts to the EEC that he made the posts.

Employees who are candidates for political office should be cautious of the limitations of the Ethics Act. During an active campaign, it may be difficult for a candidate/employee to separate political activity and official State activity. In a recently published OEIG investigation, [Case No. 22-02932](#), the OEIG found that an employee running for local office violated the Ethics Act by soliciting and receiving a campaign donation during worktime, as well as making repeated telephone calls regarding his campaign during worktime.

Certain agencies may have more restrictive rules regarding political activity. For example, because the OEIG is independent and non-partisan, its employees may not participate in a campaign for elective office at any time during their employment. 5 ILCS 430/20-10(e). Other agencies have similar prohibitions.

State employees with questions about what political activity is permissible should contact their ethics officer. A list of ethics officers is available [here](#).