



NATIONAL
FFA ORGANIZATION

Government Relations

Determining the difference between campaign and official events

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The National FFA Charter clearly restricts FFA directors, officers, or members acting on behalf of the FFA from contributing to, supporting, or assisting a political party or candidate for elective office. See the excerpt below.

36 U.S.C. § 70908.

Restrictions.

(b)

Political Activities.

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The FFA or a director, officer, or member acting on behalf of the FFA may not contribute to, support, or assist a political party or candidate for elective public office.

Political campaigns' ever-increasing length, along with the near-constant commentary from media (traditional and social), can make it difficult to determine whether activities are legislative or political. While the National FFA Organization encourages member advocacy and engagement in lawmaking, it is essential to do so without compromising the organization's integrity. This primer is designed to help.

OFFICIAL ACTIVITIES OF THOSE ELECTED OR APPOINTED TO SERVE INVOLVE WORKING ON BEHALF OF CONSTITUENTS.

Invitations for these events should arrive on official letterhead, from a local/state/federal email address, or via a member of the public office staff. Events could include introductions on a House or Senate chamber floor, bill signings related to agriculture or agricultural education, or visits to a public office during FFA Week. Inviting elected and appointed officials to participate in FFA functions is also appropriate. For example, officials are invited to attend and address the National FFA Convention & Expo. FFA members attending the State Officer Summit advocate for priority issues with the Congressional delegation.

POLITICAL EVENTS TO SUPPORT CANDIDATES INCLUDE RALLIES, FUNDRAISERS, CANDIDATE FORUMS AND MORE.

These will be run by political campaigns or organizations and come from addresses like "Friends of..." or "Committee to Elect ...". While state and federal laws vary, all elected officials must keep official resources and campaign work separate. The U.S. House and Senate Ethics Committees set guidelines regulating official space, materials, and resources. See <https://ethics.house.gov/> and <https://www.ethics.senate.gov/public/>. Occasionally, staffers may also be working on campaigns, so it's always good practice to ask clarifying questions.

ASKING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS CAN HELP DETERMINE THE INTENT OF THE REQUEST.

1. Can you provide an invitation on letterhead or via an official email?
2. Is this an official or a campaign event?
3. Who or what organization is hosting the activity?
4. What is the purpose of the function?
5. What role are members expected to play?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EQUIPPING MEMBERS TO ENGAGE IN THESE ACTIVITIES

Reviewing the excerpt from the FFA Charter with members can help them avoid unintended situations. In addition, politely remind them not to add pins, hats, stickers, etc., to Official Dress. With the ease and speed of sharing images in the twenty-first century, helping members appreciate the intent of the FFA Charter can go a long way in protecting the integrity of the organization, the emblem, and the jacket.

QUESTIONS AND NATIONAL FFA CONTACT

Feel free to contact the National FFA Organization with any questions or for guidance. Questions can be directed to Celya Glowacki, Manager, Advocacy, Literacy and Ag Based Experiences, at cglowacki@ffa.org.