General Order

Houston Police Department

ISSUE DATE:	NO.
September 24, 2018	200-06

REFERENCE: Supersedes all prior conflicting Circulars and Directives, and General Order 200-06, dated September 13, 2010

SUBJECT: POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

POLICY

This General Order provides guidelines for all employees to follow regarding involvement in political activities. It is not the intent of this General Order to restrict any employee's right to lawfully participate in the political process as a citizen of the United States.

This General Order applies to all employees.

1 INTERFERENCE WITH LAWFUL ACTS

Employees shall not prevent or obstruct any citizen from lawfully participating in the political process.

2 SEEKING ELECTIVE OFFICE

Any employee seeking elective office shall notify the Chief of Police of the employee's candidacy by submitting correspondence through the chain of command and include:

a. In the correspondence a statement of understanding that no activities related to seeking elective office will be performed on duty or while wearing a department uniform.

b. In the correspondence a statement of understanding that no City of Houston resources or materials will be used for seeking elective office.

c. Separate correspondence prepared for the Chief of Police to the director of the City of Houston Human Resources Department on white interoffice bond paper advising the director of the employee's intent to seek elective office.

The director of the City of Houston Human Resources Department will review the correspondence to determine whether a conflict of interest exists. The director will notify the employee of the ruling in writing.

3 CAMPAIGNING AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

Employees who are on duty or wearing a department uniform shall not take an active part in any person's campaign for an elective position. This includes, but is not limited to, making political speeches, passing out cards or other political literature, writing letters, signing petitions, soliciting votes, or making public derogatory remarks about candidates for such elective positions.

Employees shall not use City equipment to engage in any political advocacy. This includes, but is not limited to, City owned or controlled copiers, computers, fax machines, and email systems. In addition, employees shall not use City equipment to blog, text, tweet, or post on social media for purposes of political advocacy.

Employees who are on duty shall not publicly announce opinions regarding any political matter that could be construed by any person as an official opinion of the Houston Police Department. Employees who are off duty shall not appear in a department uniform when expressing their personal political opinions or when representing any group. Employees shall not distribute or display flyers, posters, pamphlets, etc. in support or defeat of a proposition or candidate in or on City facilities.

Employees shall not use their office in any manner for the purpose of furthering their own or another's political campaign interests. Employees shall not appear in any political advertisement, whether in print or on video, wearing any portion of a department uniform (or any other uniform that resembles what is issued by the department).

Employees while wearing a department uniform shall not attend political rallies, functions, or events unless their presence is pursuant to official police business or an approved police-related extra employment. When an employee's presence in uniform at a political rally, function, or event is pursuant to official police business or an approved police-related extra employment, employees shall not publicly announce opinions or act in a manner that could be construed by any person as an official opinion of the Houston Police Department for or against a particular candidate or issue.

4 SEEKING PERSONAL PREFERMENT

Employees shall not solicit petitions, seek influence, or request the intervention of any person outside the Houston Police Department for purposes of personal preferment, advantage, transfer, advancement, promotion, or change of duty for themselves or for any other person.

5 RELATED GENERAL ORDERS

100-06, **Department Mission, Values, Ethics, and Guiding Principles**
200-08, **Conduct and Authority**
200-41, **Use of Social Media and the Internet**
300-15, **Appearance and Grooming Standards – Classified**

Art Acevedo
Chief of Police