

# Campaign Rules

## GAO Employees Organization, IFPTE Local 1921 Union

Established by the Interim Council on January 14, 2009

### Campaign Do's and Don'ts

#### Candidates and their supporters **CAN** campaign in the following ways:

- 1) Post flyers in areas where flyers are normally posted on GAO property (e.g., break rooms)
- 2) Hand out campaign material (e.g., flyers) to employees within the Bargaining Unit (i.e., members and non-members) entering or leaving GAO property, as well as employees going to or returning from lunch as long as it does not interfere with normal GAO work activities.
- 3) Talk to employees within the Bargaining Unit in person (one-on-one and/or in groups) to solicit votes, as long as it does not interfere with normal GAO work activities.
  - a. Example: A candidate holds a brown bag during lunch time for his or her campaign.
- 4) Make calls from a personal phone to an employees' personal phone, as long as it does not interfere with normal GAO work activities.
  - a. Example: A candidate or supporter uses their own cell phone to call someone's personal cell in the field they personally know to see if they can help solicit votes by talking to folks or posting flyers in that location.
- 5) Send email from a personal account to an employee's personal email account as long as it does not interfere with normal GAO work activities or violate the rules below
  - a. Example: A candidate or supporter sends an email using his or her own personal account to someone's personal email account in the field they know to help solicit votes.
- 6) Candidates may request that the Union distribute campaign materials to relevant Union members, at their own expense. Candidates who plan to request the Union to distribute campaign materials must provide materials ready for U.S. mail delivery with postage affixed. The union can use one of two methods to distribute the material:
  - a. the Secretary, in coordination with the Election Committee, can print labels and mail to relevant Union Members, or
  - b. Use an online mailing service that the Election Committee deems appropriate to safeguard membership information.
  - c. Cost to the candidate, in addition to the materials and the postage, would include the cost of the labels, and the reasonable cost of labor needed to affix the labels and mail the literature, or an online mailing service if used.
  - d. Following the election, the Union Secretary will file a report that will be available to all members that will show the cost incurred for distributing campaign materials.

#### Candidates and their supporters **CANNOT** campaign in the following ways:

- 1) Use GAO resources to campaign, such as GAO email, phones, and copiers.
- 2) Campaign while charging time to GAO or campaign in a way that interferes with others carrying out their regular work duties.

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- 3) Post flyers on GAO property in a manner that obstructs the view of other posted flyers/announcements.
- 4) Remove the flyers of another candidate or their supporters.
- 5) Post flyers in areas not designated for flyers by GAO, such as stairwells, doors to a stairwell, entrance/exit doors to GAO property, and bathroom doors.
- 6) Send emails from either a GAO or personal email account to the GAO email accounts of union members or bargaining unit staff.

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### Campaign General Rules

1) **Resources:** Candidates and their supporters cannot use GAO resource or work time to campaign.

2) **Campaigning:** Candidates may begin officially campaigning immediately upon filing with the election committee.

3) **Access to Voter Information:** Membership is confidential, so candidates and their supporters will **NOT** have access to the emails or personal contact information of union members. Candidates and their supporters should assume everyone in the Bargaining Unit is a voting union member. However, candidates have a right to view the list of union members. To do so, they should contact the Secretary. This right to view the membership list does not include the right to copy and is limited to once within the 30 days before the election.

4) **Disputes/Contesting:** The Election Committee will handle all disputes during a campaign and they must be provided in writing to the chair of that Committee. An appeal of the Election Committee's decision can be made, in writing, to Gregory J. Junemann, the President of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), at (202) 239-4880. Further, a candidate may appeal IFPTE's decision to GAO's Personnel Appeals Board.

5) **Contacting Voters:** Candidates and their supporters can make initial contact with employees within the Bargaining Unit in order to campaign/solicit votes, but discussion should not take place over a GAO phone line or email or interfere with normal GAO work.

a. Example: If a candidate or supporter at HQ contacts a friend in a field office by using their own personal cell phone to talk about the upcoming elections, the candidate or the supporter should first ask if they have time to talk. If so, then both need to exchange personal contact information in order to continue their discussion so as not involve GAO resources.

6) **Contacting Candidates/Supporters:** Anyone within the Bargaining Unit can contact candidates and their supporters to gain information or opinions as long as it does not interfere with normal GAO work activities, and the discussion does not take place over a GAO phone line or email account.

Example 1: If an employee in the Bargaining Unit calls a candidate on a GAO phone to ask what they would like to negotiate with GAO management in a future contract, the candidate should ask or provide a personal email or phone line to continue the discussion.

Example 2: If an employee in the Bargaining Unit emails a supporter of a candidate to ask how they will vote or recommendations on candidates using his or her GAO account, the supporter should provide a personal email or phone line to continue the discussion.

7) **Right of Candidate to Have an Observer:** Any candidate may be permitted to have an observer at the counting of the ballots. A request for having an observer see the results that are used to certify the election must be made of the chair of the Election Committee.

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The chair of the Election Committee and IFPTE staff will determine the time and place that candidates' observers may view the results.

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### Campaign Q&A

- 1) How can I campaign when I don't have access to personal information of union members?
  - a. Membership status is confidential, so assume everyone in the Bargaining Unit is a member.
  - b. The Election Committee will send out a Voter's Guide before the election with your statement of interest to the whole Bargaining Unit. In that statement you can provide your contact information, as well as website URL.
  - c. For a fee, you can request that the Union send printed campaign materials to relevant Union members.
  
- 2) How can I contact voting members in the field if I'm a candidate in HQ or vice versa?
  - a. You can request that the Union send printed campaign materials to relevant Union members at your expense.
  - b. You can use your network of supporters in field offices, contacted via personal telephone or email, to help solicit votes on your behalf.
  - c. The Election Committee will send out a Voter's Guide before the election with your statement of interest to the whole Bargaining Unit. In that statement you can provide your contact information, as well a website URL.
  
- 3) Can candidates or their supporters post or solicit a slate of candidates?
  - a. Yes, candidates or their supporters can campaign for a slate of candidates.
  
- 4) Can candidates or their supporters post negative ads about other candidates?
  - a. Yes, but the material cannot violate our Union's Constitution (e.g., negative statements toward someone's race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation) or GAO's code of conduct.
    - i. If a complaint is filed with the Election Committee, they will determine if the campaign material in question violates the rules mentioned above. If a determination is made, the candidate(s) or supporters responsible for the material in violation will be directed to remove the material at once.
      1. If the violation in the candidate's campaign flyer, website, or other material is particularly egregious, the Election Committee has the authority to revoke the candidate's eligibility to seek office.