

Ethics Guidance
**PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC EVENTS WITHIN 90 DAYS OF
AN ELECTION OR WITH A CANDIDATE PRESENT**

To avoid any appearance that Department of Commerce employees are using Government resources or the authority of their offices for political purposes, the following guidelines should be followed when Commerce employees participate in a public event at which a candidate will be present (including an incumbent running for re-election) or any public event within 90 days of an election that could be perceived as benefitting a candidate.

- An employee should attend an event in an official capacity only if there is an agency purpose for his or her attendance.
- A candidate should be invited to a Government event only if there is an agency purpose for the candidate's attendance. (This is unlikely if the invitee does not already hold a Government office or position.)
- An employee present at an event should not refer to either the election or the party affiliation of the candidate.
- If the employee speaks at an event, any remarks referencing a candidate should be limited to the candidate's role in the specific project or action for which the event is being held. Remarks should not be made regarding the candidate's general performance in office.
- An employee should not attend an event that is arranged or organized by campaign staff or a political party.

Employees should seek advice from the Ethics Law and Programs Division with regard to arranging events for Senate-confirmed Department of Commerce officials, participating in joint media events, participating in an event that could be perceived as supporting a political candidate or party, or if they have any other questions regarding the appropriateness of participating in an event, or personal participation in political activities.

For advice on these rules, contact the Ethics Law and Programs Division at
202-482-5384 or ethicsdivision@doc.gov.