As a public institution, staff and faculty of Western Washington University must abide by applicable laws and institutional policies regarding political activity.

The Ethics in Public Service Act (RCW 42.52.180(1)) states: “No state officer or state employee may use or authorize the use of facilities of an agency, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of a person to an office or for the promotion of or opposition to a ballot proposition... Facilities of an agency include, but are not limited to, use of stationery, postage machines, and equipment, use of state employees of the agency during working hours, vehicles, office space, publications of the agency, and clientele lists of persons served by the agency.”

De minimus use exceptions do not apply to political activity, any use of state resources is prohibited.

Examples of legally permissible activities:

• Wearing campaign buttons to work or placing campaign material in personal, assigned space.
  - But balancing that free speech right against the obligation to not use visible public facilities to post or present such material, which might leave the impression that the campaign is favored by the institution, its leadership or staff.

• Participating in campaigns on personal time. Personal time is:
  - time outside the individual's normal work day, or
  - vacation or other approved leave status.

Political creed is a protected classification under the Washington Law Against Discrimination. Persons serving in supervisory capacities should recognize the risk that employees may view overt political statements, including such simple acts as wearing a campaign button, in a manner which negatively impacts an employee's work environment.

Other applicable laws and policies:
RCW 42.52.160  RCW 42.17A.550  RCW 42.17A.635  RCW 42.52.130  RCW 42.52.180  De Minimis Usage AAG Advisory Opinion
POL-U5400.13 Using University Property for Political Activity

Questions?
Please contact the Office of Government Relations
Nora Selander, Director, selandn@wwu.edu
Elissa Hicks, Policy and Affairs Coordinator, hickse2@wwu.edu