



Employee Candidacy and Public Office Service Policy

Policy Number: GA 3010

Effective Date: 7/2026

Review Date: 07/2030

Approved By: President and Executive Cabinet

1. Purpose

This policy affirms the College of Southern Maryland's ("College" or "CSM") support for employee participation in the political process and establishes guidelines for such involvement. Its purpose is to ensure that employees who hold political office do so in a manner that avoids actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest, does not interfere with the performance of their College responsibilities, and complies with the Maryland Public Ethics Law.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

3. Definitions

Employee(s) includes all faculty, staff, temporary employees, and contractual employees of the College.

Conflict of Interest means a situation in which an employee's personal, financial, or outside interests could influence, or appear to influence, the employee's impartial and independent judgment in performing College duties.

Candidate (or Political Candidate) means an individual who is holding or running for an elected public office in any level of any federal, state or local government, including individual seeking election in a general election, primary election, or a nominating caucus, and individuals who have filed for a formal declaration of candidacy or have made a public statement of their candidacy prior to the legal opportunity to declare.

Campaign means an organized effort to influence individuals and/or groups to elect a particular Candidate or Candidates to public office.

Candidate Surrogate or Advocate means another politician, celebrity, or person of influence, campaigning on a Candidate's behalf.

College Resources means College time, facilities, equipment, IT systems, email/listservs, networks, social media accounts/handles, trademarks/logos, office supplies, and other assets.



4. Policy Statement

- A. CSM recognizes that a vibrant community is strengthened by citizens' participation in the political process. To that end, any employee may run for and hold political office.
- B. Upon assuming an elected or appointed full-time or major part-time office, the employee will be deemed to have resigned their college employment, unless sufficiently in advance of assuming office they request and are granted annual leave and/or a leave of absence without pay.
- C. To maintain its tax status, the College cannot participate in or intervene in any political campaign and must prevent its resources from being used in any way that could appear to support a political candidate, political party, or ballot measure.

5. Procedures

- A. Employees must notify **Compliance & Risk Management** before running for political office, at which time a review is conducted and documented. The review process includes, but is not limited to, an assessment of whether an actual, potential, or perceived conflict may exist and any guidance. Results of this assessment will be issued within 15 business days.
 - i. 30 days before assuming an elected or appointed full-time or major part-time office, employees must notify Human Resources/PCE, Compliance, and their direct supervisor/manager of their leave option or employment resignation decision aligned with any guidance issued during the initial disclosure. Leave and resignation notices must follow CSM's policies on leave, including any requirement for advanced approval.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for complying with this policy, engaging in political activity only in a personal capacity and without use of College Resources, and seeking guidance or reporting concerns to Compliance & Risk Management.

Supervisors and Managers are responsible for reinforcing compliance expectations and promptly elevating potential concerns to Compliance & Risk Management.

The Assistant Vice President of Government Relations serves as the policy owner and provides institutional oversight regarding political activity, candidate interactions, and external political engagement affecting the College.

Compliance & Risk Management serves as the central intake for questions, guidance, and reports of potential violations of this policy. In addition, Compliance & Risk Management coordinates review of political activity disclosures with the employee, the employee's direct manager/supervisor, Human Resources, and/or other appropriate individuals or offices.

Human Resources (People, Culture, and Engagement) partners on employee-related reviews and corrective or disciplinary actions, as applicable.



7. Enforcement and Compliance

Compliance with this policy is a condition of employment. All employees are expected to understand and adhere to the requirements of this policy and to seek guidance when questions arise.

A. Reporting and Review

Alleged or suspected violations of this policy, including misuse of College Resources or conduct that may reasonably be perceived as institutional endorsement or opposition of a political candidate, party, organization, political action committee, or ballot-measure committee, must be reported promptly to the Office of Compliance & Risk Management. Reports may be made directly or through established College reporting channels.

The Office of Compliance & Risk Management will conduct an initial assessment and coordinate review with appropriate College offices, including People, Culture, and Engagement (PCE/HR), Government Relations, Public Safety, and/or Executive Leadership, as appropriate. Not all reports will result in formal investigation or disciplinary action; many matters may be resolved through clarification, guidance, or corrective action.

B. Corrective and Remedial Measures

When non-compliance is identified, the College may take one or more corrective or remedial actions, depending on the nature, severity, and circumstances of the violation. Such measures may include, but are not limited to:

- Counseling, training, or written guidance;
- Issuance of a written warning or corrective action plan;
- Removal or correction of improper communications or materials;
- Restrictions on future use of College Resources;
- Recusal from certain duties or events;
- Other management actions designed to prevent recurrence and mitigate institutional risk.

C. Disciplinary Action

Violations of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary actions, up to and including termination, in accordance with CSM policies.

D. External Implications

Conduct that violates this policy may also implicate external legal requirements, including the Maryland Public Ethics Law and federal tax-exempt regulations. In such cases, the College may be required to take additional actions, including reporting to external authorities or cooperating with governmental inquiries, as required by law.

E. Good-Faith Reporting and Non-Retaliation



Good-faith reporting of concerns or potential violations under this policy is encouraged and protected. Retaliation against individuals who raise concerns, seek guidance, or participate in a review process in good faith is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

8. Related Policies and References

GA 3011 Free Speech & Expression

HR 4025 Conflict of Interest

HR 4122 Political Activity

PER. 721 Employees Who Wish to Run for Political Office

CSM Petition, Handbill, and Literature Distribution Procedures

Maryland Code, Title 5, Subtitle 1-4

9. Review and Revision Process

This policy will be reviewed and revised as needed, but no more than every four (4) years.

10. Policy Administration

Policy Owner: President

Policy Administrator: Assistant Vice President of Government Relations

For more information, contact the Policy Subject Matter Expert, Assistant Vice President of Government Relations.