

As a government employee, you still have a First Amendment right to speak out on important issues. However, your government employer also has an interest in promoting an effective and efficient workplace. In this guide, we break down your speech rights under the Constitution.

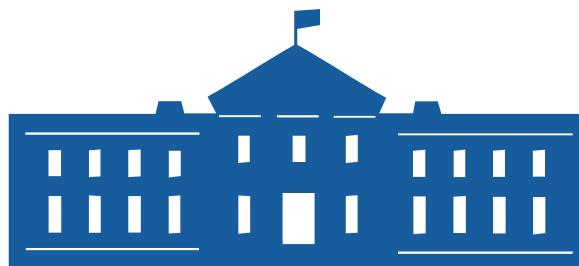
As a general matter, if you are speaking

- (1) as a private citizen,
 - (2) about a matter of public concern, and
 - (3) your speech does not interfere with your job,
- your speech is protected.

However, there are exceptions. You can use the flowchart inside this guide to help you figure out whether or not particular types of speech are likely to be legally protected.

This guide does not provide specific legal advice, but rather provides an overview of this complex area of law. If you believe your rights have been violated, contact your agency's Inspector General, or the ACLU!

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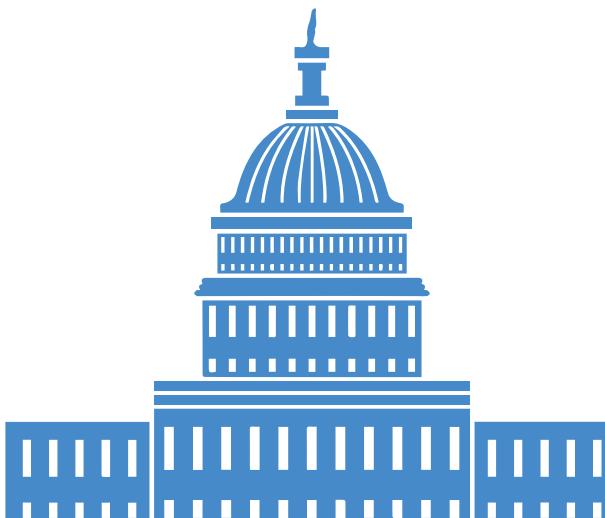


RESOURCES:

- » For more information about the Hatch Act, visit <https://osc.gov/Pages/HatchAct-FAQs.aspx>.
- » For more information about the Hatch Act's specific rules regarding social media, visit <https://osc.gov/Pages/The-Hatch-Act-Frequently-Asked-Questions-on-Federal-Employees-and-the-Use-of-Social-Media-and-Email.aspx>.
- » For more information about whistleblower protections, visit <http://www.whistleblowers.org/resources/faq-page/know-your-rights-faq>.
- » For FAQs regarding public employees' speech rights, visit <https://www.workplacefairness.org/retaliation-public-employees>.

If you believe your rights have been violated, contact your agency's Inspector General, or the ACLU!

- » You can contact the ACLU of DC at intake@acludc.org or visit www.acludc.org.



Federal Employee Speech & the First Amendment: A Know-Your-Rights Guide



ACLU
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(Please note these are general principles—not legal advice.
Contact an attorney if you have questions or need more information)

