



TORONTO POLICE SERVICES BOARD

POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF POLICE OFFICERS

DATE APPROVED	December 16, 2004	Minute No: P396/04
DATE(S) AMENDED	November 15, 2010	Minute No: P292/10
DATE REVIEWED	November 15, 2010	Minute No: P292/10
REPORTING REQUIREMENT		
LEGISLATION	<i>Police Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.15, as amended, ss. 31(1)(c), 46. Political Activity of Municipal Police Officers, O. Reg. 554/91.</i>	
DERIVATION		

As provided for in section 46 of the *Police Services Act*, “[N]o municipal police officer shall engage in political activity, except as the regulations permit.” Ontario Regulation 554/91 governs the political activities of municipal police officers.

Generally, the Regulation sets out permissible political activities for municipal police officers, distinguishing situations in which officers are off duty and not in uniform. The Regulation also provides for certain exceptions where officers have taken a leave of absence from a police service.

Section 2 of the Regulation allows an officer who is not on duty and who is not in uniform to participate in a list of permissible political activities. This includes “[e]xpressing views on any issue not directly related to the police officer’s responsibilities as a police officer” but prohibits the officer from associating “his or her position as a police officer with the issue” and from representing “the views as those of a police force.”

Section 3 of the Regulation, which also deals with expressing political views, is outlined below:

If authorized to do so by the police services board or chief of police, a municipal police officer may, on behalf of the police force,

- a. express views on any issue, as long as the police officer does not, during an election campaign, express views supporting or opposing,
 - i. a candidate in the election or a political party that has nominated a candidate in the election; or
 - ii. a position taken by a candidate in the election or by a Political party that has nominated a candidate in the election.

Members of the Toronto Police Association

The Board has adopted the proposition that Members of the Toronto Police Association and/or its Executive are subject to the *Police Services Act* and its Regulations and are, therefore, like every municipal police officer, prohibited from endorsing or opposing candidates in an election. While members of the Executive of the Toronto Police Association are on leaves of absence from the Toronto Police Service, they remain subject to the Code of Conduct under the *Police Services Act* and are subject to the lawful direction of the Chief of Police. It would be contrary to the purpose and spirit of the legislation to allow police associations greater latitude to participate in political activities than that provided to individuals, the Chief or the Board.

It is the policy of the Toronto Police Services Board that:

1. The endorsement or opposition of political candidates by municipal police officers is prohibited by the *Police Services Act* and its Regulations;
2. Members of the Toronto Police Association or its Executive are subject to the *Police Services Act* and its Regulations;
3. The Chief of Police will communicate with the Toronto Police Service each time an election campaign commences to reiterate that police officers are prohibited from using their status as police officers to endorse or oppose candidates during an election; and
4. The Chief of Police will discipline any police officer who contravenes this policy.