DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330

DEC 1 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL AIRMEN

SUBJECT: Guidance on Political Activities

As the Nation prepares for the November 2012 Presidential elections, I encourage all Airmen—Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve, and civilian employees—to participate in our Nation's political process to the maximum permissible extent. It is important, however, that in doing so, we all comply with the rules that regulate the political activities of DoD personnel. These rules—rooted in U.S. law—are intended to strike the proper balance between a government employee's involvement in the political process while avoiding an improper appearance of official DoD endorsement of a particular political party, candidate, cause, or issue. These rules also prevent the misuse of one's Federal position in support of a particular political party, candidate, cause, or issue.

Prior to engaging in any activity related to the political process, all Airmen should be familiar with the rules prescribed by DOD Directive 1344.10, *Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces on Active Duty*, and as amplified in the 28 January 2008 SECDEF message, *DoD Public Affairs Policy Guidance concerning Political Campaigns and Elections*, in order to ensure a full understanding of the extent and limitations of appropriate involvement in the political process.

Specific prohibitions on political activities by DoD personnel may not be intuitive. For example, active duty personnel may not attend partisan political events in uniform, nor may they march or ride in a partisan parade, regardless of whether or not they are in uniform. Active duty personnel may display a political sign on their personally owned vehicle, but only if it is no larger than a traditional bumper sticker. Political signs may not be displayed from an on-base residence, even if the military housing development has been privatized. DoD employees may not distribute campaign literature in the Federal workplace, nor may they seek to influence the vote of any other DoD employee, except to encourage voting in general. Remember campaign activities on military installations are also strictly prohibited.

If you have any questions about what is appropriate, ask for guidance from your local legal office, and obtain any required approvals prior to engaging in the activity. I encourage you to vote and to exercise your civic rights responsibly. Thank you for your continued service to this great Nation.

NORTON A. SCHWARTZ
General, USAF
Chief of Staff