



HAWAII STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

State of Hawaii • Bishop Square, 1001 Bishop Street, ASB Tower 970 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

PROHIBITED USE OF STATE E-MAIL FOR CAMPAIGN PURPOSES

Hawaii is well into its election season and campaign activities by political candidates are under way. The Hawaii State Ethics Commission would like to remind all state officials and state employees about the restrictions that the State Ethics Code, Chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes, places on the use of State e-mail.

Hawaii Revised Statutes section 84-13, the “Fair Treatment” section of the State Ethics Code, prohibits the use of state resources for political campaign purposes. State resources include, among other things, state computers, state telephones, state copy machines, state fax machines, and state e-mail accounts. State e-mail cannot be used by state officials and employees for campaign purposes.

The State Ethics Code prohibits state personnel from using state e-mail to generate campaign material. It also prohibits the use of state e-mail to send, forward, or reply to campaign material. Campaign material may include political campaign endorsements, fundraiser material, notifications of campaign events, political party material, or other material.

On occasion, state personnel have received, from outside sources, unsolicited campaign material through their state e-mail accounts. The Hawaii State Ethics Commission realizes that state personnel may not have any control over incoming e-mail. The receipt of unsolicited campaign material may place state personnel in an awkward situation.

The State Ethics Code prohibits state officials and employees from using their state e-mail accounts to send or forward campaign material to others, or to reply to such e-mails, other than to request that the sender not send campaign e-mail to state e-mail accounts. State personnel should not otherwise use state e-mail to reply to incoming campaign material.

More information about campaign restrictions may be found in the Hawaii State Ethics Commission’s flyer, “CAMPAIGN RESTRICTIONS FOR STATE OFFICIALS AND STATE EMPLOYEES.” This publication is available at the Commission’s website, www.hawaii.gov/ethics. If there are any questions about the use of state e-mail, or about whether a particular communication constitutes campaign material, please do not hesitate to contact the Commission’s office at (808) 587-0460 or at ethics@hawaiiethics.org.

09/2010