

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Educators and Political Activity

I am a high school educator who is involved in local politics, and I have attended TEA's Civication in the past. I fully understand and appreciate how important it is to vote for pro-public education candidates. Can I wear a t-shirt or a campaign button at school endorsing a local school board candidate?

First, thank you for your political advocacy. With the support of our members, TEA will continue our 150+ year history of advocating for our students and public education at all levels of government.

Your advocacy should continue outside the workday when you are not performing school duties. However, you are not able to wear a campaign t-shirt or political button during the school day pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated §2-19-206, which is referred to as the "Little Hatch Act".

The Little Hatch Act is specific on what educators can and cannot do while in school. The Act states "it is unlawful for any teacher to display campaign literature, banners, placards, streamers, stickers, signs or other items of campaign or political advertising on behalf of any party . . ."

However, the Act goes on to say that a decal or bumper sticker on the teacher's personal vehicle while the vehicle is parked on LEA property is okay.

Your question did not mention what you teach. If you are using campaign materials as a part of student education relative to the electoral process, you should be okay but you should have a conversation with your school's administration about your plans and the materials you plan to use.

TEA would also like to invite you to attend our Summer Leadership Academy held in June. One of the keynote speakers for this year's academy is Derek Black, a constitutional law professor. His book, School House Burning: Public Education and the Assault on American Democracy will be given to all attendees. For more information, click [here](#).