

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairman Martin E. Nohe and Members
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

FROM: Ms. Mary Hynes, Chair, Governance and Personnel Committee

DATE: January 6, 2017

SUBJECT: Adoption of Policy 19 - Political Activity by NVTa Staff Members

- I. **Purpose:** Seek Northern Virginia Transportation Authority adoption of the proposed draft policy intended to provide guidance to NVTa staff and senior management, in addressing issues and concerns related to staff political activities. The proposed policy has been reviewed by the Council of Counsels. The Governance and Personnel Committee recommends NVTa adoption.
- II. **Suggested motion.** *I move adoption of proposed Policy 19 – Political Activity by NVTa Staff Members.*
- III. **Background.** The policy is intended to ensure that employees may express their opinions and engage in political activities provided such activity does not interfere with the employee’s NVTa job requirements, duties or performance or otherwise violate NVTa policies.

Coordination: Council of Counsels

Attachment: Policy 19 - Political Activity by Staff Members

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Policy Number 19 - Political Activity by Staff Members

- I. **Purpose.** The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), through this policy, allows employees to express their opinions, join political organizations, and engage in political activity provided the foregoing does not interfere with the employee's NVTA job requirements, duties or performance.
- II. **General.** Nothing in this policy is intended to limit the political activity in which an NVTA employee may participate, on his/her own time, and otherwise in accordance with law. However, if an employee wishes to engage in political activity, the activity must not be within the hours of work for NVTA job responsibilities.
 - A. Any questions regarding possibly prohibited political activity should be immediately directed to the Authority's Chief Financial Officer. This policy will be conveyed directly to each employee.
 - B. These provisions are not intended to prohibit political activity by staff members, but rather to ensure that political expressions are kept clearly separate from their NVTA job duties.
- III. **Specific Provisions.** No employee of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority shall be deprived of his/her right to vote, to express opinions, to join any political organization, or to engage in political activity; provided, however, that nothing in this section shall prohibit the NVTA from determining whether any employee's participation in the foregoing interferes with such employee's job performance.
 - A. It shall be a violation of this policy for any person employed by the NVTA to reward or discriminate against any applicant or employee because of any political affiliation or activities permitted by this policy; provided, however, that no person may be employed by the NVTA if such person is disqualified by law, by reason of such affiliation or activity, from such employment.
 - B. The NVTA shall not consider any endorsement or recommendation from any national, state or local political party, or officer thereof, in making appointments, promotions or discharges in the NVTA's service; provided that, such recommendations may only be considered, if limited to an applicant's or employee's job performance while employed by or on behalf of such political party or officer thereof.
 - C. No person employed by the NVTA shall be required, for any reason, to make a contribution of money, time or any other valuable asset to any political party, candidate or other political organization. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit the right of any employee, privately or voluntarily, to take part in the management of any political party or organization or to assist in the campaign of any candidate for public office or, as a private citizen, to express opinions and cast votes; provided such activity does not conflict with or violate NVTA duties or policies.

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- D.** No officer or employee of the Authority shall solicit, or attempt to solicit, or induce another to solicit, any contribution or donation of anything of value, or to give any endorsement by any other NVTa employee, in connection with any political campaign or political organization.
- E.** No employee of the NVTa shall use, or permit to be used, any asset owned, leased or controlled by the NVTa, on behalf of or for the benefit of any political organization or candidate for public office, including but not limited to NVTa owned, leased, rented or controlled telephone, computer, copier, paper supplies, office supplies, printers, email service and office space.
- F.** Any NVTa employee who willfully or knowingly violates, or acts in concert with others to violate, any provision of this policy, or any personnel regulation relating thereto, shall have given prima facie cause for immediate dismissal from employment. Any employee terminated under the provisions of this policy may file a grievance if the employee is permitted to do so for other alleged policy violations.

Approved by the Governance and Personnel Committee:
Approved by Northern Virginia Transportation Authority: