



BUREAU OR DEPARTMENT

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of Commissioners**

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10th District

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15th District

FRANK AGUILAR

16th District

SEAN M. MORRISON

17th District

Advisory on Regulations Related to Promotional Materials and Information – Sec. 2-586

Time Restrictive Prohibitions Related to the use of County Funds and Resources during Election Periods:

- Bars the use of County funds for printing, mailing and transmission of **newsletters** or **brochures** bearing proper name of an elected County official.
 - *Time Period:* This is for 60 days prior to a general primary election and ending the day after such general primary election, and for 60 days prior to a general election and ending the day after such general election.
 - Applies to all elected County officials during a County election period, regardless if an elected County official is running for re-election.
 - Does not apply to County officials running in non-County elections, such as mayor, state representative or senator, etc.
- Bars the use of County funds for the **broadcasting and airing** (radio or television) or **printing in a commercial newspaper** or **commercial magazine** or **public service announcements** and **advertisements for County-administered programs** that contain the proper name, image or voice of any elected County official.
 - *Time Period:* This is for any time on or after the date that the elected County official **files nominating papers for any elected office, and ends the day after such general** election if the elected County official is a candidate in such primary or general election.
- Potential exceptions: Elected official appearances on television or radio to discuss County-administered programs and initiatives.
 - An example of this would be an invitation by a local radio station to discuss the completion of a significant County-funded construction project. This interview should not be political in nature and should avoid content related to any upcoming elections.

Miscellaneous questions

Do these restrictions apply to social media?

- No, the restrictions do not apply to social media. Materials containing an elected official's appearance, image and/or name may be posted on social media.
- Exceptions, but not an exhaustive list:
 - Flyers, newsletters or brochures containing an official's name and image may be posted on a Cook County-owned website and social media account year-round.
 - Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and NextDoor.

Can commissioners and elected officials co-sponsor events during the prohibition periods?

- Yes, commissioners and elected officials may co-sponsor events, which can be posted on social media or Cook County-owned websites.
- However, commissioner and elected officials' names cannot be included on materials printed or emailed (e.g., brochures or newsletters) during the prohibition periods.

	Allowable Uses of County Elected Officials' Names and Likeness	Not Allowable During Election Period	Never Allowable (Despite Source of Funding)
Internal Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails or other communications to County personnel regarding County programs (that may contain the proper name or image of an Elected County Official) • Materials created in the normal course of business (internal memos, emails) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails to County personnel that request or pressure participation or donations to Elected County Officials, campaigns
Public Distribution (External Communications)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases • Award letters • Information available or posted on any Cook County-owned website or County-owned social media account <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emails containing links to the website/social media account where material is posted • Annual reports that are required by law to be published during the prohibition periods • Segments posted on public educational, government access channels (such as Cook County's Cable Access Network) (e.g., Talk with Toni, Treasurer's Office Fireside Chats) • Business cards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed or electronic newsletters, brochures, annual reports, palm cards or printed marketing collateral¹ that bear the proper name of an elected County official • Public service announcements and advertisements for County-administered programs that contain the proper name, image or voice of any elected County official • Robocalls regarding County-administered programs with the proper name or voice of any elected County official (allowable if it does not contain elected official's voice) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information available or posted on any Cook County-owned website or County-owned social media account that is prohibited political activity

Permanent Prohibitions:

The Ethics Ordinance bars the name or image of any Cook County elected official on restricted promotional materials or items if designed, paid for, produced and/or distributed using public funds or resources.

Promotional items include but are not limited to: bumper stickers; commercial billboards; lapel pins or buttons; magnets; sports teams; items of clothing or apparel; stickers; pens or notepads; cups; sewing kits; first aid kits; calendars; vehicles or equipment.

¹ Any printed material used to promote an elected official.