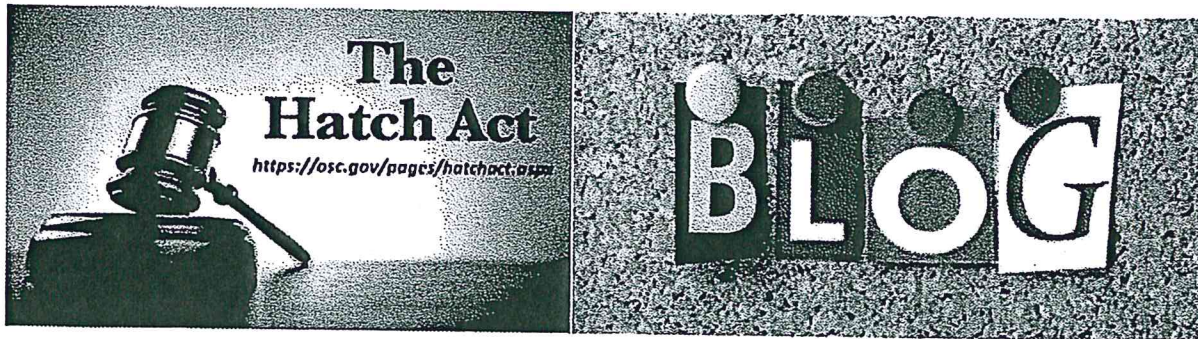


## **Ethics in Brief: THE HATCH ACT & INTERNET "BLOGS"**



### ***What You Absolutely Need to Know About Writing "Blogs" in Your Personal Capacity, as a Private Citizen:***

**Question:** *May I write a blog expressing support (or opposition) of a political candidate or a political party?*

**Answer:** *YES, you may write a blog, in your personal capacity as a private citizen. But you are subject to the following limitations: You may express your personal opinions about political candidates, political parties, or partisan political groups, but you may **NOT** do so:*

- *While on duty,*
- *While in a Federal building, and*
- *You cannot refer to your official USDA title or authority in the blog.*

*So, you may write a blog, in your personal capacity, off- duty, and off-site. BUT make sure that you do not solicit or receive any political contributions at any time. In other words, you should not ask readers to make contributions to a political party, candidate, or partisan political group. Also, don't post links to the contribution page of any of those entities' or individuals' campaign websites.*

***Career-SESer are further restricted and should contact the Office of Ethics before posting anything on their blog concerning a partisan political campaign.***

***Questions: Office of Ethics at (202) 720-2251 or Stuart.Bender@oe.usda.gov***