

<h1>BROOKINGS</h1>		<i>Policy Title:</i>	
		<b>Nonpartisanship Policy</b>	
		<i>Policy No.</i>	<b>OGC-102</b>
<i>Responsible Office</i>	<b>Office of General Counsel</b>	<i>Issue Date/ Effective Date</i>	<b>June 1, 2003</b>
<i>Responsible Officer</i>	<b>General Counsel</b>	<i>Last Revision</i>	<b>May 25, 2016</b>

## 1.0 Summary

Brookings is a nonpartisan, tax-exempt organization, and, as a result, may not participate in partisan political activity. Here is a summary of Brookings’s Nonpartisanship policy:

- Scholars may provide analysis and policy options to candidates or public officials on a non-partisan and non-exclusive basis (provided that they make themselves reasonably available to other candidates and officials).
- You may engage in personal political activity, such as attending political rallies, so long as you do not use your Brookings affiliation.
- You may not use Brookings’s resources for political activity or campaign at work.
- Scholars may use their Brookings affiliation in sign-on letters provided there is language indicating that affiliations are for identification purposes only.
- If you provide exclusive support to a campaign, you must do so in your personal capacity and you are required to:
  - Notify Brookings;
  - Not use your Brookings’s affiliation;
  - Not represent or counsel candidates or officials at public events or in the media;
  - When relevant, as determined in the first instance by the scholar herself or himself, disclose your political affiliation in any work or media; and
- If you act as a surrogate or publicly counsel candidates, parties, or officials, or if your political activities interfere with your Brookings’s obligations, you must take a leave of absence.
- Steering Committee members may not affiliate with any campaign, or candidate exclusively.

## 2.0 People Affected

This Policy applies to all Brookings employees and resident scholars (“Brookings Personnel”). Except for providing analysis to candidates or public officials on a non-partisan and non-exclusive basis as part of their Brookings work, non-resident scholars, affiliates, and

independent contractors should never use their Brookings affiliation in connection with partisan political activity nor may they use any Brookings resources for partisan political activity.

### **3.0 Policy**

To protect the Brookings Institution's commitment to nonpartisanship Brookings Personnel will observe the following policy with regard to political activities.

#### **3.1 Non-Exclusive Analysis and Policy Options Permitted**

In keeping with the Institution's mission, Brookings Personnel may provide non-exclusive analysis and recommendations on matters of public policy on a nonpartisan, non-exclusive basis to public officials and candidates for public office. Briefing or otherwise providing information to a political candidate, elected official, government employee or political party or campaign staff as part of one's regular Brookings's duties does not constitute political activity. Such work, subject to the rules outlined below, requires no notification.

When providing briefings and background information to political candidates and government officials, Brookings Personnel must make themselves reasonably available to other political candidates and government officials.

#### **3.2 Use of Brookings Resources and Campaigning at Work is Prohibited**

*No one* may use Brookings's resources, including email accounts, computers and phones, or Brookings premises for partisan political activity. Consistent with the Institution's solicitation and distribution policy, no one may distribute or display campaign materials supporting or opposing an active political candidate or political party or otherwise campaign in the Brookings workplace.

#### **3.3 Political Activity in A Private Capacity is Permitted**

This policy does not impact the rights of Brookings Personnel to vote for any candidate or issue. Brookings Personnel may also engage in other forms of personal political activities so long as they do not use their Brookings affiliation when doing so. These include:

- Contributing money to a candidate, political party, political action committee or political cause;
- Registering for a political party or as an "independent";
- Working on a non-partisan basis to register voters, help operate a polling station, or count votes;
- Signing nominating petitions to support getting a candidate or an issue on the ballot; and
- Attending a political rally or participating in a demonstration or protest.

### 3.4 Sign-On Letters

Brookings scholars may sign a statement endorsing or opposing a candidate. The letter may only include the scholar's title or affiliation with Brookings if it also contains language indicating that affiliations are provided for identification purposes only and do not indicate the organizations' support.

### 3.5 Exclusive Affiliation with a Campaign Requires Notification and Media Disclosure

If Brookings Personnel advise candidates, political campaigns, or political organizations, such as political action committees or party campaign committees, in any private circumstance that connotes exclusive support, they must do so in a personal capacity and may not do so on Brookings's time. They must make clear that they are acting as individuals and not on behalf of Brookings. They must refrain from representing or counseling candidates at public events or media appearances, and they should not use their Brookings affiliation in any public communications with, or on behalf of, a campaign or candidate.

Brookings Personnel who choose to affiliate with a political campaign, candidate for public office, or political organization on an exclusive basis must notify their Vice President, the General Counsel, the Executive Vice President and the Vice President of Communications before beginning the affiliation. An email to the relevant vice president and one of the other officers listed is sufficient.

Brookings Personnel who choose to affiliate with a campaign or candidate on an exclusive basis must disclose their affiliation in any written work or media in which they discuss topics relevant to that political activity or take positions that might reasonably be construed as supportive of the candidate or campaign with whom they are affiliated or critical of other candidates, campaigns or political positions.

***The primary responsibility to disclose and the judgment about whether disclosure is appropriate rests with the individual scholar.*** Program Vice Presidents, however, may insist on disclosure and program Vice Presidents shall have the ultimate authority to determine whether disclosure is required and what constitutes adequate disclosure. This applies regardless of whether any candidate is mentioned by name and in all phases of all elections (e.g., local, state or national, primary or general).

If a scholar finds that campaign activity creates such a significant constraint on his or her Brookings responsibilities—either because the scholar is opting not to comment and publish on topics because of his or her campaign advisory role or because everything he or she publishes must have an accompanying disclaimer, then the scholar should confer with his or her program Vice President to reach a mutual understanding about the feasibility of continuing to both advise a campaign and work for Brookings.

### **3.6 Acting as a Surrogate Requires a Leave of Absence**

Brookings Personnel must request a leave of absence if they wish to serve as a surrogate or counsel candidates at public events or media appearances, or if their political activities interfere with, or take time away from, their Brookings obligations.

If a Brookings employee opts to take an unpaid leave of absence to work on a campaign, then the minimum amount of leave taken must be two pay periods. The effective (start) date and the end date for unpaid leaves of absence must coincide with payroll periods.

### **3.7 Steering Committee Members May Not Affiliate Exclusively**

Members of the Steering Committee will not affiliate with any campaign, advise any candidate on an exclusive basis, even outside official hours, or make personal endorsements of candidates.

### **3.8 Nonresident Affiliates, Trustees and Independent Contractors**

Except for providing analysis to candidates or public officials on a non-partisan and non-exclusive basis as part of their Brookings work, nonresident scholars such as Non-resident Senior Fellows, other affiliates, and independent contractors may not use their Brookings's affiliation in connection with any partisan political activity. They are also prohibited from using Brookings's resources for political activity or campaign work. Trustees, nonresident affiliates, or independent contractors may only provide exclusive support to a campaign or candidate in their personal capacities without using their Brookings affiliation.

## **4.0 Supporting Forms**

- Table of permitted and prohibited activities by employee title
- FAQs

## **5.0 Approvals**

The following Brookings's personnel reviewed and approved this Policy:

- General Counsel
- Steering Committee

## **6.0 Distribution**

This Policy should be distributed to all Brookings's programs, departments and units.