



BOARD OF ETHICS  
CITY OF CHICAGO

May 11, 2020

**To: City employee**

**Re: Case No. 20008.C; Letter of Admonition; Prohibited Political Activities**

Dear Mr. [X],

On February 25, 2020, you emailed me, explaining that you had mistakenly forwarded a birthday event invitation for a State Representative from your work email address to a few of your contacts and did not notice that it was also a fundraising event. By email, I advised you that: (i) we would report this matter to our Board at its [next] meeting, with the recommendation that the Board determine it to be minor violation of the Ethics Ordinance, and if the Board so determines, you would be sent this letter of admonition advising you not to repeat the mistake; and (ii) you re-send the email from the proper address.

At its meeting today, the Board of Ethics considered whether this constituted a minor violation and, after deliberating, determined that your forwarding this invitation did constitute a “minor” Ordinance violation. The Board then directed me, pursuant to Ordinance §2-156-070(b), to send you this confidential letter of admonition. Thus, you are hereby admonished that §2-156-135(b) of the City’s Governmental Ethics Ordinance prohibits any City official or employee from “intentionally misappropriat[ing] any property or resources of the city in connection with any prohibited political activity.” Intentionally using a City email address to send political content, or even to respond to political content, is prohibited. The determination of a minor violation is consistent with Case No. 15014.C, where we advised a City elected official that he committed a minor violation by including, on what was clearly a political website, the City seal and other indicia of an official City or ward website, with links to information about constituent services, ward events, community and/or real estate development or permit information or news.

Please also be advised that, if this minor violation is repeated, the Board would be required by law to consider it a non-minor violation, and would then advise that you may self-report it to the Office of the Inspector General, and, if you did not, the Board would be required to do so and make this minor violation part of the record of that report.<sup>1</sup>

On behalf of the Board, I appreciate your honesty and desire to comply with the standards embodied in the Ethics Ordinance. Please contact me with any questions.

Yours very truly,

[signed]  
Steven I. Berlin  
Executive Director

---

<sup>1</sup> In Case No. 14006.A, the Board set out the factors to consider when considering whether a violation is minor: (i) would determining that the violation was minor still uphold the spirit of the Ordinance; (ii) would a third party view the violation as technical and; (iii) finally, whether there was there a pattern evincing a negligent disregard of the Ordinance.