



CITY OF CHICAGO



BOARD OF ETHICS

**ADVISORY MEMORANDUM
>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE<**

To: All Candidates for Elected City Office

From: Board of Ethics

Re: Prohibited Use of Chicago Police Department personnel and logos in electioneering communications

Date: January 30, 2023

The Board has recently been made aware of, and received complaints showing, electioneering communications put out by or on behalf of candidates for elected City office and/or their authorized political committees with images of clearly identifiable Chicago Police Department (“CPD”) personnel, logos or equipment. The Board has seen these put out by both incumbent candidates’ and challenger candidates’ committees.

The Board reminds all candidates and their campaign committees that, while Chicago Police Department Rules do not prohibit a sworn member from engaging in political activities or campaigning while off duty, it does prohibit them, in any electioneering or political communication, from either: (1) wearing a uniform or any part thereof which would identify them as a Chicago Police Officer, or using property (including facilities, vehicles, equipment, records, documents, video recordings, audio recordings, or photographs) of the Chicago Police Department; or (2) holding himself/herself out as a Chicago Police Officer.

The City’s Governmental Ethics Ordinance prohibits any candidate or elected official from engaging in or permitting the unauthorized use of City property, including any intellectual or personal property, equipment, such as CPD or Chicago Fire Department logos, for political purposes. It also prohibits them from intentionally using any City property or resources in connection with prohibited political activity.

The Board reminds all candidates and their political committees that their use of photographs or videos of CPD or other City personnel in uniform could not only subject those personnel to investigation and/or discipline by their own departments, but also subject the candidates to formal proceedings and possible public findings that they violated the City’s Governmental Ethics Ordinance, and fines up to \$20,000 per violation.

As always, the Board of Ethics is available for consultation **before** any action is taken or electioneering communication is published or disseminated. Please contact us at 312-744-9660.