



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All UCS Judges and Justices

**FROM:** Hon. Joseph Zayas  
Chief Administrative Judge

**SUBJECT:** Prohibition against campaign contributions

**DATE:** August 14, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Joseph Zayas", written over the "FROM:" field.

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In view of the upcoming local elections this November, and the presidential and statewide elections scheduled for 2024, it is important for everyone to remember the strict prohibition against campaign contributions by judges, judicial candidates and judicial personal appointees.

**Judges:** Sitting judges who are not in their “window period” for election or re-election to judicial office are prohibited from making any contribution to any political organization or candidate.

**Judicial Candidates:** A judge or non-judge who is a candidate for public election to a judicial office, during the “window period” of their candidacy, may not make outright political contributions, but in furtherance of their own campaign:

- may contribute to their own campaign for office to the extent permitted under the Election Law; and
- may “purchase two tickets to, and attend, politically sponsored dinners and other functions,” subject to price limitations.

See 22 NYCRR § 100.5(A)(1)(h) & (A)(2). Candidates seeking detailed guidance on permissible expenditures in the course of their judicial campaign can contact the Judicial Campaign Ethics Center at 888-600-5232.

These restrictions apply broadly to all elections, including national elections, as well as state and local elections outside New York State. *See, e.g.*, Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics, Advisory Opinion 11-146.

Moreover, please remember that these restrictions are part of the broader overall provisions stating that judges and judicial candidates may not “directly or indirectly engage in any political activity” unless an exception applies. *Id.* § 100.5(A)(1) (emphasis added).

**Personal Appointees:** Finally, personal appointees of judges are prohibited from contributing, directly or indirectly, “money or other valuable consideration in amounts exceeding \$500 in the aggregate during any calendar year to all political campaigns for political office, and other partisan political activity, including, but not limited to, purchasing tickets to political campaigns” (except that the \$500 limit does not apply to an appointee’s contributions to their own campaign). *Id.*, § 100.5(C)(2) (emphasis added).

Please make sure that you adhere strictly to the guidelines noted above, and please also forward this memorandum to your personal appointees, so that they also are reminded of these restrictions.

Any questions about how to comply with Part 100 can be directed to Laura Smith, Chief Counsel to the Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics, at 212-428-2504 or [lalsmith@nycourts.gov](mailto:lalsmith@nycourts.gov).