

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY

ETHICS REVIEW PANEL

ADVISORY OPINION 00-04

Advisory Opinion 00-04 is in response to [REDACTED] a Baltimore County Public School employee, ("Petitioner") who is asking if it would be appropriate for CASE (Council of Administrative and Supervisory Employees) to continue the PAC (Political Action Committee) that was established in 1997 to increase the organization's visibility in the political arena. The activities of the PAC include attendance at political affairs, meeting with politicians to share information and concerns, and the contribution of PAC funds to political activities and candidates. Do these activities follow the provisions of the Ethics Code?

The relevant section of the Ethics Code is as follows:

*ETHICS CODE : Conflict of Interest*

8363.4 a.b.c.

*4. Political Activity*

*(a) Affirmation of Political Rights*

*The Baltimore County Public Schools recognize the rights of Board members, employees and volunteers to participate in political and governmental affairs in the manner afforded all other citizens: the right to vote, the right to be an active member of a political party, the right to campaign for election to public office, and the right to seek, campaign for, and serve in public office.*

*(b) Restrictions*

- The political activities of any employee or volunteer seeking or holding public office or campaigning for a political candidate must be conducted outside the workplace and outside working hours.*
- An employee or volunteer must not involve students in political activities for him or herself or for any party, candidate, or political issues which the person is promoting.*
- An employee or volunteer must refrain from exploiting the privilege of his or her position.*

*(c) Prohibited Activities*


The following activities are specifically prohibited on property under the jurisdiction of the Board, except by guidelines established by the Board and bargaining units:

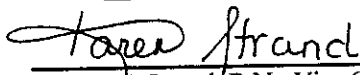
- posting of political circulars or petitions
- the use of any school or office stenographic help, telephones, supplies, or equipment

It is the opinion of the Panel that the operation of the PAC appears to be in compliance with the BCPS (Baltimore County Public Schools) Ethics Code. However, the Panel advises that CASE check to be sure that it is in compliance with any existing agreement between the bargaining unit and Baltimore County.

**This Advisory Opinion has been signed by the Ethics Panel members and adopted**

on June 15, 2000

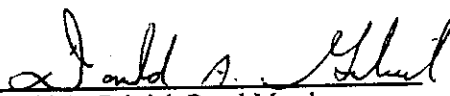
  
James G. Klair Esq., Panel Member

  
Karen W. Strand, R.N., Vice Chair

  
Joy Shillman, Chair

ABSENT

Roland L. Unger, C.P.A., Panel Member

  
Donald A. Gabriel, Panel Member