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of Policing**

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Inspector General of Policing Memorandum and Advisory Bulletin

TO: All Chiefs of Police and
Commissioner Thomas Carrique O.O.M.,
Chairs, Police Service Boards

FROM: Ryan Teschner, Inspector General of Policing of Ontario

DATE: July 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Inspector General Memo and Advisory Bulletin #4.1:
Political Activity -- Police Service Board Members &
OPP Detachment Board Members

As part of my advisory role under section 102(4) of the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* (CSPA), I am writing to provide information and advice regarding political activity by members of police service boards and OPP detachment boards.

In advance of the upcoming municipal elections, questions may arise regarding the extent to which board members may engage in political activities while continuing to fulfill their governance responsibilities with boards.

The CSPA requires police service board members and OPP detachment board members to comply with each of the applicable Codes of Conduct. These Codes are regulations — that is, they have legal force — and, among other things, establish standards of conduct that may apply when members participate in political activities.

These Codes are set out in:

[Ontario Regulation 408/23 \(Code of Conduct for Police Service Board Members\)](#); and
[Ontario Regulation 409/23 \(Code of Conduct for OPP Detachment Board Members\)](#).

While political activity is not prohibited, board members must ensure that activities in which they engage do not:

- conflict with their statutory duties as board members;
- create actual or perceived conflicts of interest between their role as board members and their political activity;
- compromise their impartiality as board members; or,
- undermine public confidence in the board or the police service.

The enclosed Advisory Bulletin #4.1 is being released in line with my statutory duty to provide advice to the Ontario policing sector concerning compliance and performance. The Advisory Bulletin provides an overview of the legislative, governance, and ethical considerations applicable to board members who participate in political activities or seek elected office. It also highlights key compliance, conflict-of-interest, accountability, and public trust considerations to support effective governance and informed decision-making.

I trust this information will be helpful to you. Should you have any questions, please contact your Police Services Advisor.

All IG Memos and Advisory Bulletins are posted on our website: www.iopontario.ca.

Sincerely,



Ryan Teschner
Inspector General of Policing of Ontario

c: Mario Di Tommaso, O.O.M.
Deputy Solicitor General, Community Safety

Enclosed: Advisory Bulletin
Political Activity: What Board Members Need to Know.

Note: Advisory Bulletins are the IG's advice provided pursuant CSPA s. 102(4) and are intended as a resource for the sector by offering the IG's general interpretation of various provisions of the CSPA. Advisory Bulletins are not legally binding, and they do not purport to address all possible factual scenarios or circumstances. As such, you may wish to consult with legal counsel to determine how this general guidance should be applied in your own local context and to navigate specific situations.



Advisory Bulletin 4.1: Political Activity – Police Service Board Members & OPP Detachment Board Members

Date of issue: July 24, 2026

What you need to know

1. Board members are governed by prescribed Codes of Conduct

The Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 (CSPA) requires police service board members and OPP detachment board members to comply with prescribed Codes of Conduct. The Codes of Conduct are set out in:

- [Ontario Regulation 408/23 \(Code of Conduct for Police Service Board Members\)](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 409/23 \(Code of Conduct for OPP Detachment Board Members\)](#)

These Codes apply to all board members and establish conduct standards that may be engaged when members participate in **political activity** (e.g., campaigning, canvassing, attending partisan events, fundraising).

2. While political activity is not prohibited for board members, it must not conflict with board duties or undermine public trust in the board or police service

The Codes of Conduct do not contain standalone provisions related to political activity. However, they **require board members to take certain actions** where they are in a conflict of interest (defined below) and not conduct themselves in a manner that undermines, or is likely to undermine, public trust in the board or the police service.

Political activity by a board member **may raise concerns** where it:

- creates (or reasonably appears to create) a conflict of interest;
- involves speaking on behalf of the board without authorization;
- uses confidential/non-public information obtained through board duties;

- uses the member's position to benefit themselves or someone with whom they have a personal relationship (e.g. uses their official title (e.g., "Police Services Board Member") in their own election campaign materials or when publicly endorsing another candidate, creating the impression that the endorsement carries the authority or support of the board.); or,
- otherwise risks the board member or board failing to comply with the CSPA or its regulations.

This list is **not** exhaustive.

3. Key Code of Conduct provisions commonly engaged in relation to a board member's political activity

a. Public trust

Members must not conduct themselves in a way that undermines or is likely to undermine public trust in the board or the police service (subject to limited good-faith considerations).

b. Statements and communications

Members must not knowingly make false statements relating to board duties, must not purport to speak on behalf of the board unless authorized, and must clearly indicate when expressing a personal opinion when commenting on matters related to the board, the service it maintains or members of the service.

c. Confidentiality and information handling

Members must not access, collect, use, or disclose information obtained in the course of their board duties contrary to law, including the CSPA, and must not disclose to the public information obtained through board duties except as authorized by the board or as required by law.

d. Conflicts of interest and recusal

Both Codes of Conduct define "conflict of interest" broadly to include any situation where a board member's private interests or personal relationships, place, or may be reasonably perceived to place, the member in a conflict with their duties as a board member. Board members must make an individual assessment when determining whether a conflict does in fact exist, or may be perceived to exist by a reasonable member of the public. There may be instances where the prudent course of action for a board member is to err on the side of caution where there is uncertainty as to whether a conflict may be perceived to exist.

Where a conflict of interest exists, a board member is required to promptly disclose the conflict, and refrain from participating in discussion or voting with respect to the matter at a board meeting. Members should also be mindful of other applicable legal duties, including the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* (where applicable).

- [Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.50](#)

e. Using the position for benefit / advantage

Members must not use their position to benefit themselves, benefit someone with whom they have a personal relationship, or interfere with the administration of justice. An example of where this may be engaged is where a board role/title is used to advance a political candidate or campaign, solicit support, or create the impression of institutional endorsement.

4. Intersection with police officer political activity rules (for awareness)

Ontario Regulation 402/23 (Political Activity) restricts the forms of political activity that a police officer may engage in. While this regulation does **not** apply to board members, board members should be aware of these restrictions and ensure they do not engage with police officers, including command officers, in a manner that may result in that officer contravening the restrictions on political activity set out in this regulation. For example, a board member who is a candidate in a campaign for political office should not seek the attendance of a local chief of police at their political campaign event.

- [Ontario Regulation 402/23 \(Political Activity\)](#)

5. Misconduct disclosures and the IG complaint process

Where a board member reasonably believes another board member's conduct constitutes misconduct, the Codes of Conduct require disclosure to the board chair, or if the misconduct involves the chair, to the Inspector General of Policing (IG). As part of their statutory mandate, the IG receives and investigates complaints about board member misconduct.

- See [Inspectorate of Policing — IG Advisory Bulletin 1.4 \(for related disclosure guidance\)](#)

What you need to do

1. Keep political activity separate from your board member role

When engaging in political activity (e.g., campaigning, canvassing, attending partisan events, fundraising), ensure that you do not act so as to create the impression that you in your capacity as a board member, or the board as a whole endorses a candidate/party/position or that the police service is aligned with a political campaign.

Seeking advice: If you are unsure whether a proposed activity could create a real or perceived conflict of interest, raise concerns about public trust, involve the use of board resources, or otherwise engage your Code of Conduct obligations, seek advice as early as possible. Board members may wish to consult the board chair (or vice-chair), the board's professional staff, their municipal clerk (for election-related rules), the municipality's or board's legal counsel, as appropriate, and their Inspectorate of Policing Police Services Advisor. General IG guidance and resources are also available on the Inspectorate of Policing website ([IG Advisory Bulletins](#)).

Recommended practices:

- Do not use board or police service letterhead, email or social media accounts, contact lists, meeting time, or resources for political purposes/activity.
- If your board title appears in a biography, ensure it is accurate and accompanied by clear language that you are not speaking for the board at a political event.
- Be cautious about social media posts that may undermine public trust, including those that reference the board or police service in the context of political activity by a board member.

Boards and members should be mindful of broader election-related rules that may apply in their context, including:

- [Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched.](#)
- [Election Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.6](#)
- [Canada Elections Act, S.C. 2000, c. 9](#)

2. Align your conduct with the Code of Conduct rules on statements

If you speak publicly on policing matters while engaged in political activity, ensure that your statements and other communications, including social media posts and public comments, comply with the Code of Conduct:

- Do not represent that you are speaking for the board.
- Clearly indicate when you are offering a personal opinion.
- Avoid statements that could reasonably undermine trust in the board or police service.

3. Identify, disclose, and manage political conflicts of interest

Political activity may create an actual or perceived conflict of interest where a member is a candidate, organizer, fundraiser, or endorser in an election, or where a member's political activity relates to matters that may come before the board. For example:

- **Using the board role in political activity** (e.g., campaign messaging or advocacy) may suggest influence over or pre-judgment of matters that may come before the board.
- **Fundraising, organizing, or endorsing a political campaign** tied to policing issues may give rise to a real or perceived conflict (e.g., advocating for increased police funding or decisions the board must consider).

Where the Code of Conduct conflict of interest definition is met, members must:

- Promptly disclose the conflict of interest to the chair (or to the IG if the conflict involves the chair).
- Disclose the conflict of interest on the record at the next board meeting after disclosure.
- Not participate in discussion or voting on the matter (for which there is a conflict of interest) at board meetings.

4. Protect confidential/non-public information

Do not use or disclose information obtained or made available to you in the course of your duties as a board member, including for political purposes. **Address alleged misconduct promptly.**

If you reasonably believe a board member's political activity constitutes misconduct under the Codes of Conduct, disclose it to the chair, or to the IG if it involves the chair. A disclosure to the chair constitutes a complaint under section 106 of the CSPA. The board chair must forward this information to the IG in accordance with section 108 of the CSPA and applicable IG guidance.

- [Advisory Bulletin 1.4 | Inspectorate of Policing](#) (for related disclosure guidance)

What we will do

The Inspectorate of Policing will use information received (including disclosures and complaints relating to board member conduct) to support the IG's mandate, including by monitoring compliance and determining whether an investigation or other action is appropriate.

Where allegations of misconduct are received, the IG will review the information and circumstances to determine the appropriate response under the IG's complaint-handling and oversight framework.

The Inspectorate of Policing will continue to provide sector guidance and resources to support boards in complying with the CSPA and its regulations and maintaining public confidence in the civilian governance of policing.

Note: Advisory Bulletins are provided for information purposes only and are not a substitute for legal advice. They do not purport to address all possible factual scenarios or circumstances. As such, you may wish to consult with legal counsel to determine how this general guidance should be applied in your own local context and to navigate specific situations.

Applicable references (quick links)

- [Ontario Regulation 408/23 — Code of Conduct for Police Service Board Members](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 409/23 — Code of Conduct for OPP Detachment Board Members](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 402/23 — Political Activity](#)
- [Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.50](#)
- [Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched.](#)
- [Election Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.6](#)
- [Canada Elections Act, S.C. 2000, c. 9](#)
- [Inspectorate of Policing — IG Advisory Bulletins](#)

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Political Activity: What Board Members Need to Know

Political activity is permitted, but board members must avoid conflicts of interest, protect confidential information, and maintain public trust.

Do

- ✓ Keep campaign activity separate from your board role.
- ✓ Use accurate biographies with a disclaimer that you are not speaking for the board.
- ✓ Be cautious with social media posts that reference the board or police service.
- ✓ Seek advice if unsure about conflicts, public trust or board resources.
- ✓ Ensure any personal views expressed align with Code of Conduct obligations and do not undermine public trust.

Don't

- ✗ Use board letterhead, email, contact lists or resources for politics.
- ✗ Use your board title to advance a campaign or imply board endorsement.
- ✗ Post content that creates the impression your board member role is being used for political campaign purposes
- ✗ Assume that using your personal account means there are no Code obligations.
- ✗ Use confidential information obtained through your board duties for political purposes.

If political activity creates a conflict (actual or perceived), members must:

1. Promptly disclose it
2. Disclose it on record at the next board meeting
3. Not participate in discussion or voting on the affected matter