



INFORMATION PAPER

19 February 2018

SUBJECT: Participation by Active Duty Officers in the Activities of Private Associations

1. **PURPOSE.** To summarize restrictions applicable to Army officials in dealing with private commercial entities or other private associations.

2. **FACTS.** Subject to certain restrictions, DA officials may participate in their private capacity in the activities of both commercial enterprises and other private organizations. Pertinent restrictions include the following:

a. DoD personnel must avoid any action which might result in, or create the appearance of, giving preferential treatment to any person or entity (DOD 5500.7-R, paras 3-204 and 3-302).

b. DA personnel are precluded from taking any official actions that selectively benefit or endorse individuals or organizations. DoD personnel shall not use their official titles or positions in connection with any commercial enterprise or to endorse any commercial product (DOD 5500.7-R, para 3-209).

c. DA personnel who are members or officers of non-government associations or organizations must not engage in activities on behalf of the association or organization that are incompatible with their official government positions (DOD 5500.7-R, para 3-211).

d. Subject to limited exceptions, DoD personnel shall not allow the use of their names or titles in connection with charitable or nonprofit organizations (DOD 5500.7-R, paras 3-300 and 3-301).

f. DoD and DA policy provides that government facilities, property, and manpower will be used only for official government business.

g. With regard to the support of private organizations, even quasi-military organizations composed entirely of active and retired military personnel, DA personnel are prohibited from engaging in any practice that involves or implies DA sponsorship of the organization and its activities (AR 600-20, para 4-11).

h. DA personnel are prohibited from wearing the Army uniform in connection with the promotion of any commercial interest or when engaged in off-duty civilian employment (AR 670-1, para 1-10j(1)).

SUBJECT: Private Organizations – Membership Drives

1. PURPOSE. To Provide Information Regarding Inappropriate Membership Drive Activities for Private Organizations (PO).

2. FACTS.

a. Commanders must ensure PO membership activities comply with the Joint Ethics Regulation, DoD 5500.7-R.

b. Commanders must ensure that membership in private organizations is truly voluntary. The following are examples of prohibited practices for membership drives:

(1) Any practice that involves or implies DA sponsorship or the organization or its activities.

(2) Use of on-duty personnel, or personnel in uniform to conduct individual or corporate membership drives, and the use of government property (copier, mail, etc.) to support such drives.

(3) Rewarding soldiers for joining an organization by giving passes, early release from duty, or any other preferential treatment.

(4) Keeping lists of non-members (or members) of an organization and using such a list to exert pressure on non-members to join an organization.

c. Commanders must ensure their actions and those of their subordinates do not create the impression of endorsement by DA for an organization or constitute impermissible assistance to a private organization.

d. The following are practices are permissible:

(1) Reasonable efforts to inform and encourage personnel, without coercion, regarding the benefits and worthiness of a PO.

(2) Use of military grade as part of an individual's name in relationship to membership in a private organization.

(3) Distribute literature to inform soldiers about a private organization in accordance with public affairs regulations.