

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 12, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT  
UPON HIS VETO  
OF THE HATCH ACT AMENDMENTS

THE OVAL OFFICE

1:48 P.M. EST

I am returning to Congress today without my signature a bill that would lift the ban against partisan political activity by Federal civil servants. For almost 40 years under the Hatch Act civil servants have been allowed an active role in the Democratic process. They can vote, they can attend rallies and conventions, they can contribute to the candidates of their choice.

However, the Hatch Act has also prohibited civil servants from engaging in other far more partisan activities, such as political campaigns. The prohibition against the partisan politics in the Civil Service was written into the law for two very sound and worthwhile reasons: to assure the American people that their affairs were being conducted with an eye on the public interest, not a partisan interest, and to protect civil servants themselves from undue political coercion.

I believe that the concerns that have been valid for the last four decades are still valid today. The public business of our Government must be conducted without the taint of partisan politics. I am, therefore, returning this bill to the Congress without my approval.

END (AT 1:49 P.M. EST)