

Text of Email from Peter Gillett to Kim Pastva  
Regarding the Proposed Revised Policy on Political Activity  
February 7, 2017

Hi Kim:

The Executive Committee looked at the proposed revised policy on political activity on Friday afternoon, and was happy with one exception, in the first paragraph:

Policy Statement Every member of the university community has a right to participate or not, as he or she sees fit, in the election process. However, as an institution, Rutgers University shall be free of partisanship in its governance and conduct. The university shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign for public office on behalf of a particular candidate, ballot referendum or political party.

In particular, the sentence:

The university shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign for public office on behalf of a particular candidate, ballot referendum or political party.

There are two related issues:

It seems to be ambiguously drafted.

Is the university to refrain from three things, namely any political campaign for public office on behalf of a particular candidate, ballot referendum, political party?

or is the university to refrain from three kinds of political campaign, for public office on behalf of a particular candidate, ballot referendum, political party?

The ambiguity arises in the context of its not being clear to us that a ballot referendum is necessarily a political campaign - but if it is not, it is not clear to us why the university should always be forbidden to intervene.

Consider this: if NJ holds a ballot referendum on the matter of raising and giving to Rutgers \$2bn, why would we have forbidden the university to intervene by, say, letting faculty and students know how important support for this could be to us?

So although the language gave us pause when we were discussing it, the more important point is: why forbid participation or intervention in all ballot referenda, as this does.

Anyway, I hope this is helpful, and I'm sorry not to have got this to you yesterday morning. Another victim of cruel fate

Best wishes

Peter R. Gillett  
Chair, Rutgers University Senate  
2016–2017