

## MEMORANDUM

**FROM:** Betsy K. Dawson  
**DATE:** ---- 1997  
**RE:** I-97-21: Use of e-mail for political advertising

You inquired whether the use of the e-mail by a county employee to campaign for the position of member of the Board of Trustees for the pension plan violated the ethics law. I have not answered you sooner, because I wanted to meet with the LAN administrator to discuss this issue, thinking that the county might already have policies about the use of the e-mail and other broadcast media for transmitting personal messages. They have no such policies, but William F. Ryan, the Acting Information Services Manager, and some of the other members of his staff agree that there should be such policies in place. They indicated that they will take the matter up directly with the Director of Administration.

I advised them as I now advise you that the use of the e-mail for the purposes stated above, violates the ethics law, §3-104(a), which states that, "An employee may not use the prestige, title, or authority of the employee's office or position for the employee's private gain or the gain of another."

I hope that rules for the use of e-mail will be adopted soon to prevent this sort of thing from happening again. In the meantime, if you choose to file a complaint against the employee involved you are entitled to do so.

If you have further questions, please call me anytime. I apologize for any inconvenience my delay in responding has caused you.