

October 20, 2006

By Electronic and Interoffice Mail

Re: IO-06-79

You inquired whether the ethics law prohibits employees from parking their personal vehicles in fire station parking lots when those cars are bearing large campaign signs or even campaign bumper stickers. The ethics commission advises that the ethics law does not prohibit employees from parking their cars, howsoever adorned, in county parking lots. As long as the vehicle is used for transportation to and from the work place, and is not parked there on a permanent or semi-permanent basis, it is considered merely an incidental use of county facilities. Since county parking lots are generally open to visitors and other non-employees, there is no way of stopping the expression of political opinions on the cars of people who park in them. One can take comfort in knowing that after November 7, all the signs will come down.

Thank you for your inquiry. If you have additional questions, do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Betsy K. Dawson
Executive Director