Washington State House of Representatives
Social Media Policy Overview
Megan Stockhausen
Digital Media Coordinator
Caucus Accounts

Washington House Democrats

WA House Democrats

Washington House Democrats

Washington House Democrats
Member Accounts
CHAPTER 13: HOUSE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guidelines for the development and implementation of social media tools largely follow those applied to traditional forms of communication while also acknowledging the informal nature of social media. These guidelines were created to provide helpful, practical advice to protect HRC and HDC members and staff. These guidelines reflect ever-evolving technologies and online social media tools to ensure they remain current to the needs of the House of Representatives.

For the purpose of this policy, “social media accounts” refers to on-line and mobile platforms that support interactive dialogue such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Blogger, Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest.
C. CONTENT

Caucus communications staff is permitted to post information that is of interest to a broad audience without necessarily attributing the content to a specific member. (For the purposes of this policy "posts" should be broadly interpreted to mean posting a status update on Facebook, tweeting, uploading a photo or video, etc.)

Individual Member and Campaign Facebook pages may like/link to Democrat/Republican Caucus pages, but the inverse is not true. The action of individual members/campaigns on their own sites should not be interpreted as consent/approval from the respective Caucuses.

To meet users' expectations of a more conversational style, caucus staff has additional leeway in tone and content compared to traditional media as press releases and newsletters that use a more formal tone. Social media users expect a higher level of creativity and levity in social content. Staff are encouraged to use an informal tone while still meeting requirements to present information that is truthful, respectful, and in accordance with the House's ethics rules and policies.

Social posts may include multi-media content including photos, audio files, and online video. Social posts may include links to and content from outside sources such as traditional media outlets, stakeholder websites, and state agencies. However, at no time may social media accounts link to a political campaign site.
House Social Media Posting Guidelines

Does the content:

- **Have a legislative nexus?**
- Refrain from discussing or linking to political campaign materials?
- Refrain from impugning other members or their motives?
- Refrain from linking to third party content that impugns other members or their motives?
- Refrain from disclosing private or confidential information?

Additional considerations (if applicable):

- If the content contains facts, are they verifiable?
- If the content contains a quote of opinion, is it clearly attributed?
A comment that violates one or more of these rules will be removed at the discretion of the House. The House reserves the right to suspend comment privileges of anyone who repeatedly violates these rules:

- Public comments on posts will not be edited by House staff.
- All opinions and comments should contribute to the dialog and stick to the topic. As it is an official legislative site, we do not allow any campaign-related information. The Caucus reserves the right to remove any posts which are unrelated to legislative discourse or which are profane, obscene, personally abusive or threatening, or which incite lawless action.
- Comments are not open to the promotion or advertisement of a business or commercial transaction or charitable solicitation.
- Comments containing private personal information such as Social Security numbers, private phone numbers or home addresses are prohibited.
- Comments posted to social media pages in no way constitute legal service of any demand, legal notice, or official communication to the House or any official or employee for any purpose.
- Questions specific to a legislator should be submitted directly to that member’s office
- This comment policy is subject to amendment or modification at any time to ensure its continued use is consistent with state ethics laws, House rules, and its intended purpose as a limited forum.

**Staff shall not engage in an opinionated or editorial dialogue with users, but may provide clarifying or informational responses to comments, such as referring readers to an agency URL for more information or linking to bill reports relevant to the conversation.**
Comments

- Staff frequently monitor social media accounts to remove inappropriate or offensive comments.
- Each official legislative page has a publicly posted copy of the HDC comment policy, and comments in violation of these rules are generally “hidden” first.
- We reserve the right to suspend comment privileges of anyone who repeatedly violates the rules.
  - A process is in place to first provide a warning and then to ban those who are “trolling” or repeatedly in violation.
Contact Information

Megan Stockhausen
Digital Media Coordinator
Washington House Democrats

megan.stockhausen@leg.wa.gov