§ 3-304. Board employees; conflicts of interest. 1. No board of elections employee shall engage in or participate in any trade or business which creates, or may tend to create, an actual or potential conflict of interest. No board of elections employee shall maintain a direct financial interest in or be employed by a vendor or a company providing services to a candidate who has an election overseen by such employee's office, including but not limited to, printing companies, election consulting companies, direct mail companies and digital marketing companies. No board of elections employee shall maintain a direct financial interest in or be employed by a vendor or company that sells to the board voting machines, electronic poll books, printers or other technical or electronic equipment. A violation of any of the provisions of this subdivision shall be cause for discipline by the board of elections, including removal of the board of elections employee.

2. No board of elections employee shall remain on the board of elections payroll while also a candidate for an office who has an election overseen by the board at which they are employed, without prior authorization by a majority vote of the board of elections commissioners and in accordance with the rules and regulations of the state board.

(a) The state board shall promulgate rules and regulations relating to the circumstances that may permit a board of elections to authorize an employee who is also a candidate for an office who has an election overseen by the board at which they are employed to remain employed, provided that such employee be restricted from working on matters directly related to the election in the jurisdiction in which the employee is a candidate and any other restrictions set forth by state board rules and regulations.

(b) For the purposes of this article, a board of elections employee shall be deemed a candidate for elective office upon the filing of a designating or nominating petition for such office or, where nominations for such office are made other than by petition, upon acceptance of a nomination. Such employee may remain in "leave without pay" status until such time as their candidacy shall cease, or upon the day following the certification of election results for such office, whichever comes first.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, when there are no primary elections for the office being sought by a candidate that is employed by the board of elections, that candidate may remain on the board of elections payroll for no more than ninety days prior to a general election.

(d) The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply to unpaid party positions.

3. It shall not be considered a conflict of interest for a board of elections employee who is a member of a county committee as defined in section 2-104 of this chapter, a district leader as outlined in section 2-110 of this chapter, a member of the state committee as described in section 2-102 of this chapter, a delegate or an alternate delegate to judicial district nominating conventions as described in section 6-124 of this chapter, or a delegate or an alternate delegate to national party conventions as described in section 2-122 of this chapter who, as part of their duties in said party position, endorses or supports a candidate for a party position or public office.