



## NEWS RELEASE

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# Union outraged over firing of Correction Officer for partisan political activity

The largest state employees union today says it is outraged that on the eve of celebrating this country's most basic freedoms, a state employee has been fired because he chose to be involved in the political process. Correction Officer Charlie Daniels, who won his primary race in Ohio's 95<sup>th</sup> House District, was fired last night by the Dept. of Rehabilitation and Correction for being a candidate in an election in his Southeastern Ohio District, a violation of Ohio's "Little" Hatch Act.

"This is fundamentally unfair and goes against all the democratic freedoms that our founding fathers fought for and that our military men and women continue to fight for today," said Christopher Mabe, president of the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association.

"Here's a life-long public servant who believes in this country enough to not only run for political office, but also to serve in our nation's navy and to work in a state prison, and who now is being fired despite those efforts and that sacrifice," said Mabe.

Ohio's Little Hatch Act bars specifically classified public employees from running for public office. The law does not, however, prevent unclassified employees from fully participating in the political process.

"Charlie Daniels has played by the rules, served his country and is now being shut out of the democratic process. Now he's a second-class citizen. It's just plain wrong," said Mabe.

Daniels is one of dozens of public employees who were galvanized by last year's fight to save Ohio's collective bargaining law, and are running for political office this year.

Unclassified public employees who work alongside classified employees are not barred from running for office under Ohio law, but instead take leaves of absence when participating in an activity that could be in conflict with their duties on the job. During the Senate Bill 5 battle members of Governor Kasich's cabinet took leaves of absence.

"All we're asking is that Mr. Daniels, a 17-year employee, have the same rights as other state employees who are not prevented from participating in this most basic of democratic activities," said Mabe.

*OCSEA represents approximately 33,000 public employees who work in a wide range of security, regulatory, administrative, direct care, maintenance, customer service and other positions. For more information, contact Sally Meckling, 614-865-2602 or 614-404-3881 (cell).*