



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON, DC

November 3, 2015

AF/JAA  
1420 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington DC 20330-1420

Colonel (Ret) David Belote  
PO Box 4026  
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

Dear Colonel Belote:

It has been brought to our attention that you have been campaigning for a seat in the Virginia State Senate out of District 8. A review of your campaign website and associated social media sites has given rise for concern. We find that you are making improper use of your uniform and military status as part of a partisan political activity.

The applicable regulation is Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 1344.10, *Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces*, dated February 19, 2008. Paragraph 4.3.1., of this directive states that members not on active duty who are nominees or candidates for civil office "may, in their campaign literature (including Web sites, videos, television, and conventional print advertisements) use or mention, or permit the use or mention of, their military rank or grade and military service affiliation; BUT they must clearly indicate their retired or reserve status." Rather than your generic use of the term "Veteran," we would ask that you use the term "USAF Retiree" or "USAF Retired Service Member" in connection with each photograph, or group of photographs, where you are depicted in military uniform.

Paragraph 4.3.1.2., further provides that candidates for civil office may, in their campaign literature, "include or permit the inclusion of their current or former specific military duty, title, or position, or photographs in military uniform, when displayed with other non-military biographical details. Any such military information must be accompanied by a prominent and clearly displayed disclaimer that neither the military information nor photographs imply endorsement by the Department of Defense or their particular Military Department...." On your campaign website ([www.votebelote.com](http://www.votebelote.com)), there is a disclaimer at the bottom of the webpage which reads "Use of these images does not imply endorsement by the Department of Defense or the US Air Force." We would ask that you place this disclaimer in a more prominent position. Other affiliated sites (including [www.facebook.com/votebelote](http://www.facebook.com/votebelote) and <https://davebelote.ngpvanhost.com>) do not appear to have a disclaimer. We would request that you include a prominent and clearly displayed disclaimer on those (any other affiliated) sites as well.

Finally, paragraph 4.3.2., provides that candidates for civil office "may NOT, in campaign literature (including Web sites, videos, television, and conventional print advertisements) use or allow the use of photographs, drawings, and other similar media formats of themselves in uniform as the primary graphic representation in any campaign media, such as a billboard, brochure, flyer, Web site, or television

commercial.” On all of your campaign sites, the primary graphic representation appears to be a photograph of you saluting in Service Dress in front of an American flag. We would ask that you change your campaign website, other affiliated websites and social media sites to only include photographs of you in military uniform when displayed with other non-military biographical details. A member of the general public conducting a casual perusal of your electronic campaign literature could easily conclude that an Active Duty member of the Air Force was running for a state legislature.

We thank you for your cooperation and your service to our nation. We trust that no further communication on this issue will be necessary.

Sincerely,

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CONRAD M. VON WALD, SES  
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