

Government employees being told to help Rob Astorino's re-election bid

By [Kirstan Conley](#)

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Government employees are being told to use their time off to help incumbent Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino get re-elected next week, according to an email.

“Please clear your schedule and donate Thursday, Friday and Monday to the campaign,” Deputy Commissioner of Social Services Philippe Gille wrote the employees in an email obtained by The Post.

“You can use personal or annual leave (not sick leave) for this purpose,” he added. “Please expect to donate your time.”

The directive states that staff should also plan to work for free to help the campaign after they vote on Election Day, a paid day off for most government workers.

Employees were instructed to meet at a Teamsters' hall on Wednesday night to hear more about “what is expected” of them.

County workers were told to find 10 to 20 friends and family members to get to the polls and to pick up absentee ballots for acquaintances and relatives who cannot get to the ballot box.

It's illegal to use taxpayer-funded resources for political purposes.

In February, a social services employee won a \$380,000 settlement after claiming she was demoted and fired for refusing to back Astorino's 2013 campaign.

The county employees were also asked to provide "security" at polling places in southwest Yonkers, where voters likely favor Astorino's opponent, Democratic state Sen. George Latimer.

"It's critical that only duly registered voters vote in these heavily Democratic precincts," Gille wrote.

Latimer demanded that Astorino fire all campaign and county workers responsible for the push.

"He needs to denounce this effort immediately," Latimer said.

He charged that the plan to police polling precincts in Democratic neighborhoods reeks of "voter suppression," is "racist," and comes "right out of the Trump/Bannon playbook."

Astorino's campaign insisted that Gille did nothing wrong.

"This is a personal communication and there is nothing wrong with it being sent," said campaign spokesman Bill O'Reilly.

"Mr. Gille and anyone volunteering for County Executive Astorino's re-election are following the letter of the law. And providing ballot security in districts with the heaviest registration advantage for one's opponent is standard operating procedure in any campaign, regardless of who lives there. What would be real news is George Latimer paying the five years and \$48,742 he still owes in property taxes, but we're not holding our breath."