



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

DEC 12 2012

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ARMY

SUBJECT: Private Organization Membership Campaigns

As the world's premier ground fighting force, the United States Army is well-organized, equipped, and trained to succeed in any mission it is asked to perform both today and in the future, even as an already complex strategic environment continues to adapt and evolve. Many private organizations have been supporters of our success. These organizations tirelessly advocate to help in a variety of ways from shaping defense policy to positively improving the professional and personal well-being of soldiers, civilians, and their families. These private organizations enjoy close, historical ties with the military community. Many are composed largely of serving and retired military and civilian personnel from all of the components. As you know, official Army support to private organizations is strictly regulated (see DoD 5500.7-R, *Joint Ethics Regulation* and AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy*).

In spite of our best efforts, many soldiers perceive that they are being coerced to join certain organizations and that their membership in such organizations is tracked. Any coercion, real or perceived, is unacceptable and does not befit this magnificent Army. Any practice that involves or implies compulsion, coercion, undue influence, or reprisal in the conduct of membership campaigns is strictly prohibited. This prohibition includes holding repeated orientations or meetings, or counseling those who have decided not to join after being provided information about the organization. It also includes using membership statistics when evaluating an individual's duty performance. While you may discuss the general merits and benefits of joining and participating in private organizations, without showing favoritism for one organization over another, all of your actions must be done within the limits of the standards of conduct principles discussed above.

Senior leaders will ensure that the chain of command implements and abides by the standards of conduct involving private organization membership campaigns so that soldiers' rights are protected. Ethics counselors are available to assist with training regarding these rules.

ERIC K. SHINSEKI
General, U.S. Army
Chief of Staff

Thomas E. White
Secretary of the Army