



U.S. SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Employment Negotiations and Recusal *Quick Reference*

Highlights

Members, officers, and employees seeking future employment must avoid not only an actual conflict of interest, but also the appearance of a conflict between their duties to the Senate and the interests of the prospective employers with whom they are negotiating.

For purposes of Senate Rule 37 (Conflicts of Interest), the Select Committee on Ethics (the Committee) defines a negotiation as the discussion of the terms and conditions of employment after an offer has been made and the Member, officer, or employee is considering accepting the offer. An employment arrangement begins when an offer has been made and accepted.

Senators

Employment Involving Lobbying Activities: Senators shall not negotiate or make an employment arrangement for a job involving lobbying activities until after their successor has been elected.

Other Private Employment: For any other future private employment, Senators must:

- File a signed public disclosure with the Secretary of the Senate, Office of Public Records (SH-144) within 3 business days after commencing a negotiation or employment arrangement for private employment or compensation; and
- Recuse themselves whenever there is a conflict of interest, or the appearance of one, with respect to the prospective employer, and disclose such recusal in writing to the Committee.

The *Disclosure by Member of Employment Negotiations and Recusal Form* (Form 37.14(a)) can be found on the Committee's website, www.ethics.senate.gov.

Employees whose rate of pay is \$130,500 or more

Senate employees whose rate of pay is \$130,500 or more must:

- Notify their supervising Senator after commencing a negotiation or employment arrangement with a prospective employer;
- Notify the Committee within 3 business days after commencing a negotiation or employment arrangement by completing the Non-Public Disclosure by Staff of Employment Negotiations and Recusal Form (Form 37.14(c)), which can be found on the Committee's website.
- Recuse themselves from:
 - any contact or communication with their prospective employer on issues of legislative interest to the prospective employer; and
 - any other matter in which there is a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Employees whose rate of pay is below \$130,500

The Committee notification and recusal requirements discussed above do not apply to employees making less than \$130,500 (CY 2026). However, these employees, like all Senate personnel, are prohibited from engaging in any conduct that creates a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest, including employment-related conduct.



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Post-Employment Restrictions

Quick Reference

Senators

Both federal criminal law and Senate Rules govern a Senator's two-year post-employment contact ban.

- May not communicate with or appear before any Member, officer, or employee of either House of Congress, or any employee of any other legislative office of the Congress, on behalf of a third party, with the intent to influence or seeking official action (18 U.S.C. § 207)
- May not lobby any Member, officer, or employee of the Senate (Senate Rule 37)

18 U.S.C. § 207 is enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Committee's guidance is advisory only.

Officers and employees whose rate of pay is \$130,500 or more

Both federal criminal law and Senate Rules govern the one-year post-employment contact ban that applies to officers and employees paid \$130,500 or more.

- May not communicate with or appear before any Member, officer, or employee of the Senate on behalf of a third party, with the intent to influence or seeking official action (18 U.S.C. § 207)
- May not lobby any Member, officer, or employee of the Senate (Senate Rule 37)

18 U.S.C. § 207 is enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Committee's guidance is advisory only.

NOTE: It is possible for an employee to become subject to post-employment restrictions, including the criminal ban, because of a bonus or temporary pay adjustment.

All Other Employees

- **Personal Office Staff:** May not lobby their own office for one year.
- **Personal Office Staff with Substantive Committee Responsibilities:** In addition to the personal office staff ban (*above*), personal office staff with substantive committee responsibilities may not lobby the Members or staff of the relevant committee (including all subcommittees thereof) for one year from the date the staffer last performed services for that committee. Substantive committee responsibilities include assisting in the drafting of the committee bills or assisting at hearings and in mark-up, as opposed to committee monitoring and liaison service for the personal office.
- **Committee Staff:** May not lobby the Members or staff of that committee, including all subcommittees thereof, for one year.
- **Leadership Staff:** May not lobby any Member or staffer of their party's leadership, including the personal staff of their former Senator, for one year.

Aiding and Abetting

All current Members and staff are prohibited from assisting former Members and staff in violating these laws and rules.

Please note that this is intended as a quick reference and does not represent or address all applicable authority and guidance on the subject. For more information, consult the relevant laws, rules, and standards of conduct, including the Senate Ethics Manual, or contact the Committee at (202) 224-2981 for advice concerning your specific situation.

January 2026