



U.S. SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Official Letterhead and Postage

Quick Reference

Explanation of Terms

Official Letterhead: Letterhead purchased and printed with Senate funds. All official letterhead, including any letterhead using the words “United States Senate” or “Official Business,” may only be used for official Senate business.

Unofficial Letterhead: All letterhead, including personal letterhead and campaign letterhead, not paid for with official funds. Unofficial letterhead may refer to a Senator by his or her title (e.g., “Senator Jane Smith,” or “John Smith, U.S. Senator”) but may not state or imply that the letter is being sent on behalf of the Senate (e.g., “Jane Smith, U.S. Senate,” or “John Smith, Select Committee on Ethics”). Unofficial letterhead may use an image of the Capitol dome, but may not use any likeness of the Senate seal.

Frank: The facsimile signature of a Senator in the corner of an envelope that takes the place of standard postage. The frank may only be used for the purposes enumerated in 39 U.S.C. § 3210.

Official Postage: Postage purchased with official funds. Official postage may only be used for mailings related to the official business of the Senate office.

Unofficial Postage: Any postage not paid for with official funds. Consistent with the type of funds used to purchase unofficial postage, such postage may be used for campaign mail and personal mail.

Examples of Proper Use of Official Letterhead

- Mail that is properly sent under the frank
(*Not all correspondence for which official letterhead may be used is frankable; see reverse for examples*)
- Congratulatory letters on public or personal distinctions sent in the Senator’s official capacity (*for examples of these distinctions, see Franking Quick Reference Guide*)
- Condolences sent in the Senator’s official capacity
- Mail to other legislators and public officials regarding official Senate business
- Inside mail, also known as “Dear Colleague” letters
- Letters of recommendation for staff
- Letters to Senator’s state offices regarding officially-related activities
- Responses to invitations to officially-related events
- General, nonpartisan voter registration information

Examples of Improper Use of Official Letterhead

- Solicitations on behalf of a charitable organization
- Personal correspondence, including but not limited to responses to personal invitations, such as weddings, birthdays, and other celebrations
- Correspondence endorsing a commercial entity
- Any campaign or campaign-related correspondence, including but not limited to:
 - Solicitation of financial contributions or other assistance for any campaign or election
 - Political or partisan correspondence, including political endorsements
 - Thank you letters to campaign employees, volunteers, or contributors
 - Correspondence regarding political fundraisers

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.



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Examples

Letter Contents	Letterhead Type	Postage
Response to a constituent on an official matter	Official letterhead	Frank
Congratulations on a public distinction such as citizenship or election to office	Official letterhead	Frank
Congratulations on a personal distinction such as anniversary, birth, or graduation (<i>if officially-related</i>)	Official letterhead	Official postage
Condolences (<i>if officially-related</i>)	Official letterhead	Official postage
Thank you notes for official meetings or contacts	Official letterhead	Frank
Employment recommendation for a current or former Senate office employee or intern	Official letterhead	Frank
Letter to a federal agency on behalf of a constituent	Official letterhead	Frank
Federal grant assistance on behalf of a constituent	Official letterhead	Frank
Non-federal grant assistance on behalf of a constituent	<i>Contact the Committee</i>	<i>Contact the Committee</i>
Forwarding misdirected campaign correspondence to the campaign office	Unofficial letterhead	Unofficial postage
Fundraising solicitation on behalf of a § 501(c)(3) charitable organization	<i>Contact the Committee</i>	<i>Contact the Committee</i>

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