


U.S. SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS CODE OF OFFICIAL CONDUCT TRAINING



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GIFTS

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GIFTS RULE

- **Senate Rule 35** – Members, officers, and employees *may not* accept any gift unless an exception to the Gifts Rule applies
- Applies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Applies to gifts your family members receive *if* the gift is given because of your Senate position, and with your knowledge and acquiescence
- Contains more than 20 exceptions that allow you to accept certain gifts



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WHAT IS A GIFT?

- The term "gift" is *broadly* defined and includes *anything of value*
 - Cash or cash equivalents
 - Tangible items
 - Transportation, lodging, and meals
 - Attendance at events
 - Discounts
 - Loans
 - Forbearance
 - Any other items of monetary value



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PERMISSIBLE GIFTS – UNDER \$50

- Members, officers, and employees *may accept* a gift valued at *less than \$50* if the gift is *not from a lobbyist or foreign agent*, or an entity that employs or retains a lobbyist or foreign agent
 - \$100 annual limit from each source
 - No cash or cash equivalents
 - No "buy-downs"
- Items of little intrinsic value
 - *E.g.*, baseball cap, t-shirt, or non-food items valued at less than \$10
 - Gifts valued under \$10 do not count toward the annual limit, but be mindful of the spirit of the Gifts Rule

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PERMISSIBLE GIFTS – CERTAIN SOURCES

- Gifts from relatives
 - Includes fiancés and in-laws
- Gifts from other Members, officers, and employees
 - But no gifts to supervisor or employing Senator

(5 U.S.C. § 7351)

 - *Exception:* Voluntary gifts given on traditional gift-giving occasions (e.g., marriage, retirement, holiday)
- Gifts from personal friends
 - Must get written approval from the Committee for gifts over \$250
 - Must weigh several factors to ensure the gift is given because of personal friendship, not Senate position



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PERMISSIBLE GIFTS – CERTAIN SOURCES

- Gifts paid for by a federal, state, or local government
 - Includes federally recognized Native American Tribes and public universities
- Benefits resulting from outside activities
 - Prospective employment
 - E.g., flight or lodging for job interview
 - Outside position
 - E.g., free tickets offered to all volunteers for a non-profit
 - Spouse's activity
 - E.g., +1 to spouse's company's holiday party



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PERMISSIBLE GIFTS – CERTAIN SOURCES

- Home state products for display or distribution to visitors to the Senate office
 - Must be provided by home state producer, manufacturer, or distributor
 - Must be provided in a quantity intended for distribution
 - May include a loan of home state artwork or furniture
- Informational materials
 - Must be from the publisher, author, or producer
 - Must be delivered to the Senate office

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PERMISSIBLE GIFTS – FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS

- The U.S. Constitution prohibits acceptance of gifts from foreign governments *except* where Congress has consented (**Art. I, § 9, cl. 8**)
- Under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act (**5 U.S.C. § 7342**), Congress has consented to accepting certain gifts of “minimal value”
- The Senate defines “minimal value” as \$100 or less
 - If \$100 or less, may accept and keep
 - If over \$100, may accept, but must deposit the gift with the Secretary of the Senate and must report it to the Committee within 60 days of receipt



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GIFTS – ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS

- Free attendance at certain types of events is permissible
 - Receptions
 - Food and beverages of nominal value, *not a meal*
 - Widely Attended Events
 - Officially-related, 25 people from outside Congress, and open to a wide group
 - Excluded:* Entertainment or substantially recreational events
 - Charity events
 - Campaign events
 - Constituent events
 - In *home state*, 5 or more constituents, *no lobbyists*
- May not accept other items of value (e.g., gift bags) offered at event unless they fall into a Gifts Rule exception



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AGGREGATION

- Gifts of multiple items are generally aggregated for purposes of determining value. However, if a gift is naturally divisible, a Member or staffer may be able to accept part of the gift and return or pay for the remainder
 - *Example:* If a staffer is offered two tickets valued at \$40 each from an entity that does not employ lobbyists, he/she may accept one and return the other
- Similarly, a package delivered to a Senate office is considered a single gift *to the Senator*, valued at the combined fair market value of its contents, unless items are specifically marked for individual staffers

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HANDLING IMPERMISSIBLE GIFTS

- Refuse or return impermissible gifts
 - May use the frank to return
 - Perishable gifts (e.g., flowers, food) may be discarded or donated to charity if impracticable to return
- Or pay fair market value
 - Use face value for tickets to sporting or entertainment events
 - If no face value, you must generally use the highest ticket price for the event
 - Flights on private planes have a specific valuation method assigned by federal law



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BRIBES AND ILLEGAL GRATUITIES

- Refuse any gift that is offered in connection with an official action taken or being sought
- Such a gift may constitute a bribe or illegal gratuity under federal criminal law (**18 U.S.C. § 201**)



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SOLICITATION

- As a general rule, you may not solicit anything of value (**5 U.S.C. § 7353**)
 - You may solicit for a charitable organization (501(c)(3)) if the solicitation is made in your personal capacity
 - Must be done on your own time
 - May not use any official resources
 - May not imply any Senate endorsement or involvement
 - May not target lobbyists or foreign agents

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TRAVEL



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PRIVATELY-SPONSORED TRAVEL

- Must obtain written pre-approval from the Committee *for each and every traveler*
- Must submit requests for approval at least 30 days before the start date of the trip
- Must file post-travel disclosure within 30 days of the last day of the trip
- There are significant restrictions on accepting travel expenses from private entities that retain or employ lobbyists or foreign agents
- Forms, checklists, and guidance are available on our website—www.ethics.senate.gov



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PRE-APPROVAL EXCEPTIONS

- Committee pre-approval is not required for travel paid for by:
 - Senate
 - Federal, state, or local government entities
 - Campaign committees
 - Foreign governments pursuant to MECEA and FGDA

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FOREIGN GOVERNMENT TRAVEL

- Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (MECEA) (**22 U.S.C. § 2451 et seq.**)
 - Must be approved by the State Department
 - Must be disclosed on Financial Disclosure Report
- Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act (FGDA) (**5 U.S.C. § 7342**)
 - Must be reported to the Committee on an FGDA form within 30 days of the travel



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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST



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GENERAL PRINCIPLES – NO “CASHING IN”

- **Senate Rule 37.1** – No receiving compensation or any other benefit from influence improperly exerted from your Senate position
- **Senate Rule 37.4** – No using Senate position to aid legislation where a principal purpose is to further the pecuniary interest of you, your immediate family, or a limited class of persons or entities of which you or your immediate family members are a part
- **Senate Rule 37.7** – Committee staff paid at a rate of \$25,000 or more and employed for more than 90 days must divest of any substantial holdings which may be directly affected by the actions of the employing committee

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GENERAL PRINCIPLES – OUTSIDE POSITIONS

- **Senate Rule 37.2** – Must refrain from any outside activity that could create a conflict or even the appearance of a conflict with your official duties
 - May not engage in an outside activity that is inconsistent or in conflict with the conscientious performance of your official duties
- **Senate Rule 37.3** – Must get your supervising Senator's approval to engage in any outside activity
 - Must report the outside activity to your supervising Senator at the start of the activity and each year thereafter on May 15th



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SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES – OUTSIDE INCOME

- Members, officers, and employees paid at a rate of \$132,552 (CY 2021) or more are subject to an outside earned income limit of \$29,595 (CY 2021)
 - May not earn more than this limit from all outside sources combined
- "Rate of pay" may be different than gross pay
 - *Example:* A staffer who works half-time (50%) and earns an annual gross salary of \$70,000 is earning a rate of pay of \$140,000 (\$70,000 x 2)



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SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- **Senate Rule 37.5** – All Members, officers, and employees paid at a rate of \$25,000 or more and employed for more than 90 days in a calendar year are subject to "professional services" restrictions
- Professional services involve a duty to an outside entity or client, and include:
 - Law
 - Medicine
 - Engineering
 - Architecture
 - Real estate
 - Insurance
 - Consulting
 - Any other position involving a fiduciary duty

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SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Members, officers, and employees paid at a rate below the threshold (\$132,552 for CY 2021):
 - May not affiliate for the purpose of providing professional services for compensation, but may practice a profession as a solo practitioner
 - May not permit their names to be used by outside entities providing professional services for compensation



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SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Members, officers, and employees paid at a rate at or above the threshold (\$132,552 for CY 2021) are subject to the following *additional* restrictions:
 - May not provide professional services for compensation, regardless of affiliation with a firm
 - May not receive compensation for affiliation or employment, *in any capacity*, with a firm, partnership, association, corporation, or other entity which provides professional services involving a fiduciary relationship
- Pro bono professional services are not barred by Rule 37.5 so long as no entity receives payment for the services (e.g., a doctor may provide uncompensated medical care at a free clinic)



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SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES – BOARDS

- **Senate Rule 37.6** – Generally, Members, officers, and employees paid at a rate of \$25,000 or more and employed for more than 90 days in a calendar year:
 - ✗ **MAY NOT**
 - Serve as an officer or member of the board of any publicly-held or publicly-regulated company
 - ✓ **MAY**
 - Serve as an uncompensated officer or board member of:
 - Organizations that are tax-exempt under § 501(c)(3)
 - Organizations that are principally available to Members, officers, and employees of the Senate and their families (e.g., Senate Credit Union)

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SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES – BOARDS

- Board member and officer positions that involve a fiduciary duty are subject to heightened scrutiny under **Senate Rules 37.2 and 37.3**
- Generally, you may not serve as a board member or officer if:
 - The work of the organization overlaps with your Senate duties
 - The organization receives federal funding



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SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES – HONORARIA

- Members, officers, and employees *may not accept payment* for a speech, appearance, or article (other than a book) (**Senate Rule 36; 5 U.S.C. app. § 501**)
- In lieu of honoraria, a donation of up to \$2,000 may be made directly to a § 501(c)(3) charity, subject to the following limitations:
 - You may not direct the donation to a charity from which you or an immediate family member draws any financial benefit
 - You may not take a personal tax deduction
 - You must report donations made by a lobbyist or foreign agent to the Secretary of the Senate within 30 days
 - You must report the donation on your Financial Disclosure Report




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SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES – TEACHING

- **Senate Rule 37.5(b)** – Members, officers, and employees paid at a rate of \$132,552 (CY 2021) or more may not teach for compensation without *prior written approval from the Committee*
- For employees paid below this threshold, Committee approval is not required, but, as with all outside activities:
 - Must get supervising Senator's permission
 - Must ensure no violation of honoraria ban
 - May not use Senate resources


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SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES –
POSITIONS INVOLVING GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

- In matters in which the U.S. is a party or has an interest, you *may not*:
 - Act as an agent or attorney (**18 U.S.C. § 205**)
 - Demand, seek, receive, accept, or agree to receive or accept any compensation for any representational services rendered by you or by another (**18 U.S.C. § 203**)
- For outside positions with the federal government or a state or local government, both elected and non-elected, contact the Committee for guidance

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SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES –
SPOUSE & FAMILY MEMBER LOBBYING

- **Senate Rule 37.11** – Generally, must avoid any lobbying contact with a Member's spouse or family member who is a registered lobbyist or is employed or retained by an entity that employs or retains registered lobbyists
- For other questions regarding spouse or immediate family member activities, contact the Committee for guidance

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INSIDER TRADING – DUTY OF TRUST

- Insider trading laws make illegal the purchase or sale of a security on the basis of material nonpublic information in breach of a duty of trust or confidence
- The STOCK Act affirmed that Members and employees of Congress owe "a duty arising from a relationship of trust and confidence to the Congress, the United States Government, and the citizens of the United States with respect to material, nonpublic information derived from such person's position"

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INSIDER TRADING – TIPPING

- Insider trading laws also prohibit “tipping”
- “Tipping” is giving material, nonpublic information in violation of a duty of trust or confidence to another person who trades on the information
- Both the “tipper” and the “tippee” can be liable for violations



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INSIDER TRADING – IPOs

- Members, officers, and employees paid at a rate above \$132,552 for CY 2021 are prohibited from participating in an Initial Public Offering (“IPO”) that is not generally available to the public
- Most IPOs are not generally available to the public



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FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

- Members, officers, and employees are generally permitted to seek future employment while still employed by the Senate, provided:
 - No use of Senate resources, including time and office space
 - No tie between official action and promise of future employment
- Members, officers, and employees paid at a rate of \$132,552 (CY 2021) or more must make appropriate disclosures on their Financial Disclosure Reports

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FUTURE EMPLOYMENT – DEFINITIONS

- A “negotiation” is the discussion of terms and conditions of employment after an offer has been made and the Member, officer, or employee is considering accepting
- An “employment arrangement” begins when an offer has been made and accepted



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FUTURE EMPLOYMENT – MEMBERS

- Members must file a *signed public statement* with the Secretary of the Senate within 3 business days after the commencement of negotiations or arrangements for private employment or compensation (**Senate Rule 37.14(a)**)
- Members required to file this public statement *must* also:
 - Recuse themselves whenever there is a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict with respect to the prospective employer
 - *Notify the Committee in writing* of such recusal
- For future employment involving lobbying, Members must wait until *after* their successor is elected to enter negotiations or employment arrangements (**Senate Rule 37.14(b)**)




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FUTURE EMPLOYMENT – STAFF

- Senate employees paid at a rate of \$130,500 (CY 2021) or more must: (**STOCK ACT; Senate Rule 37.14(c)**)
 - *Notify* the Committee in writing within 3 business days after the commencement of negotiations or arrangements for private employment or compensation
 - *Recuse* themselves from all official matters involving any prospective private employer whenever there is a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict

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POST-EMPLOYMENT – MEMBERS


- Members may not:
 - Communicate with or appear before any Member, officer, or employee of the *House, Senate, or other legislative office*, on behalf of a third party, seeking official action, for two years (**18 U.S.C. § 207**)
 - Lobby the Senate for two years (**Senate Rule 37.8**)



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POST-EMPLOYMENT – SENIOR STAFF

- Officers and employees paid at a rate of \$130,500 (CY 2021) or more for 60 days or more in the preceding year may not:
 - Communicate with or appear before any Member, officer, or employee of the *Senate*, on behalf of a third party, seeking official action, for one year (**18 U.S.C. § 207**)
 - Lobby the Senate for one year (**Senate Rule 37.9**)
- Salary “look back” is one year from when you leave the Senate, not the calendar year
- A bonus may subject you to these restrictions




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POST-EMPLOYMENT – ALL OTHER STAFF

- Employees paid at a rate below \$130,500 (CY 2021) (**Senate Rule 37.9**):
 - Personal office staff may not lobby their office for one year
 - Committee staff may not lobby the Members or staff of that committee, including all subcommittees thereof, for one year
 - Ban applies to all Members who were on the Committee at the time the staff member left the Senate and to Members who join the Committee during the one-year ban period
 - Personal office staff with substantive committee responsibilities:
 - May not lobby their personal office for one year
 - May not lobby the committee Members and staff for one year from the date the staffer last performed services for the committee
 - Leadership staff may not lobby any Member or staff of the leadership of the same party (including the personal staff of the leadership Member employing the staffer) for one year

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POST-EMPLOYMENT – AIDING FORMER STAFF

- *May not aid* former Members, officers, or employees in violating the post-employment restrictions
 - No “informational request” exception
 - No exception for action the office would have taken anyway
- Handling prohibited contacts:
 - Consult the Secretary of the Senate’s list to see if individual is subject to the federal criminal law ban
 - <https://www.senate.gov/legislative/lobbyingdisc.htm>
 - Contact the Committee for guidance
 - Refer the individual to the Committee for guidance

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FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

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FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE


- Financial disclosure is a mechanism for monitoring and deterring conflicts of interest
- Financial disclosure is *required by federal law and Senate Rule (Ethics in Government Act; STOCK ACT; Senate Rule 34)*
- All filers *must* obtain an eFD account
- The Committee’s website has detailed information about:
 - Who must file
 - What information must be disclosed
 - When reports must be filed
 - How to obtain an eFD account

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WHO MUST FILE?

- The following individuals must file Financial Disclosure Reports:
 - Members and officers
 - Candidates
 - Employees paid at a rate of \$132,552 (CY 2021) or more
 - Fellows, detailees, and interns are required to file with the Senate if the salary they receive from an outside organization meets this threshold, even if they already file with their home agency
 - Political Fund Designees, regardless of salary
- It is your responsibility to know if you must file

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WHAT/WHEN THEY MUST FILE


- Filers must file the following reports at the following times:
 - New Filer Report: Due within 30 days of assuming the filing position
 - Current staff may become filers due to a pay raise
 - Political Fund Designees (PFDs) do not need to file New Filer Reports
 - Candidates and most Senators file "Candidate Reports" instead of New Filer Reports
 - Annual Reports: Due annually, no later than May 15th
 - Termination Report: Due within 30 days of leaving the filing position, including when leaving Senate employment
- Filers may request extensions of up to 90 days via eFD
- Late reports are subject to a mandatory \$200 penalty

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PERIODIC TRANSACTION REPORTS (PTRs)

- Additionally, at the time transactions occur, most financial disclosure filers must file Periodic Transaction Reports (PTRs) for transactions in excess of \$1,000 of certain assets
- The PTR requirement applies to the purchase, sale, and exchange of:
 - Stocks
 - Bonds
 - Commodity futures
 - Other securities
- But does not apply to:
 - Real property
 - U.S. Treasury securities
 - Excepted Investment Funds (EIFs), such as mutual funds and exchange traded funds (ETFs)

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PTR DUE DATES

- PTRs must be filed no later than 30 days after receiving notification of the transaction, but in no case later than 45 days after such transaction
 - Notification occurs when a filer receives a written communication that a transaction has occurred (e.g., an email from a financial advisor or a monthly account statement)
- The filing deadline applies regardless of whether you are, in fact, notified of a transaction
- To avoid penalties, ensure you receive and review financial information on at least a monthly basis
- The law does not allow extensions for PTRs
- Late reports are subject to a mandatory \$200 penalty



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PROHIBITION OF UNOFFICIAL OFFICE ACCOUNTS




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PERMISSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES FOR OFFICIAL EXPENSES

- **Senate Rule 38** – Private donations of cash, goods, or services may not be used to support official activities
 - Includes co-sponsoring events with outside groups
- Generally, official expenses may only be paid using:
 - Appropriated funds
 - Senator's personal funds
 - Senator's excess principal campaign funds
 - Excess principal campaign funds may not be used for Committee expenses, employee salaries, office space/furniture, office equipment and associated IT services (other than dual-purpose cell phones), or franked mail

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EXCEPTIONS TO THE PROHIBITION

- Free exchange of information
 - Members may seek and accept advice on legislative issues from outside organizations
 - Outside organizations may provide ideas, information, memoranda, research, and legislative language to the Member as long as it is unsolicited
 - Senate office *may not direct or control* an outside organization to do Senate work
- Privately-sponsored travel
- Co-sponsored constituent service events

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CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY

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CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY – BASIC PRINCIPLES


- Senate resources may not be used for campaign activity (**31 U.S.C. § 1301**)
- Senate resources include:
 - Senate space (e.g., Dirksen cafeteria)
 - Senate equipment (e.g., Senate mobile device)
 - Senate staff time
 - Senate title (e.g., "Legislative Assistant, Senator X")
 - Senate work product

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RESTRICTIONS ON SENATE STAFF – CAMPAIGN WORK

- Officers and employees may perform paid or unpaid campaign work as follows:
 - Must be voluntary, not a condition of your Senate employment
 - Must obtain approval of your supervising Senator
 - Must be done on your own time
 - No using any official Senate resources
 - Senate may not subsidize campaign by keeping you on payroll
- Campaign income counts toward the outside earned income limit

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RESTRICTIONS ON SENATE STAFF – CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS


- Federal law prohibits making a contribution to your employing Senator (**18 U.S.C. § 603**)
- The prohibition includes:
 - An "outlay," other than for personal travel expenses
 - Contributions made by your relatives from a joint account or jointly owned asset (e.g., your spouse writing a check from a jointly owned bank account)
- The prohibition does not include:
 - Volunteering for the campaign
 - Contributing to a multi-candidate committee or PAC (e.g., DSCC or NRSC), even though some of the proceeds may eventually go to your employing Senator
 - But you may not specifically earmark any contribution for your employing Senator

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RESTRICTIONS ON SENATE STAFF – HANDLING CAMPAIGN FUNDS

- Officers and most employees may not handle (solicit, receive, be the custodian of, or distribute) any federal campaign funds (**Senate Rule 41**)
 - Unique to the Senate
- Officers and employees may, however, assist with and attend federal campaign fundraisers, provided their role does not involve handling campaign funds
 - Hosting a fundraiser is deemed to involve handling campaign funds and is therefore prohibited
- This prohibition does not apply to state and local campaign funds


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RESTRICTIONS ON SENATE STAFF – EXCEPTION FOR PFDs

- Each Senator may designate up to 3 Political Fund Designees (PFDs) on his or her personal office staff
 - PFDs must have a salary of at least \$10,000
 - At least 1 PFD must be in the DC office
 - PFDs must file certain Financial Disclosure Reports, regardless of salary
- With the permission of their supervising Senator, PFDs may handle campaign funds from the following:
 - Campaign committee of employing Senator
 - Campaign committee established and controlled by a Senator or group of Senators (e.g., DSCC and NRSC)
 - State or local committee of a national party



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RESTRICTIONS ON THE SENATE OFFICE – MISDIRECTED MATERIALS


- Contributions: No soliciting or receiving federal, state or local campaign contributions in a federal building
(18 U.S.C. § 607)
 - 7-day safe harbor for unsolicited contributions
 - Never accept a contribution connected to official action
(18 U.S.C. § 201)
- Correspondence: For misdirected campaign calls, letters, or emails, you may either:
 - Forward the inquiry to the campaign office for action; or
 - Provide the campaign phone number and address to the individual seeking information
 - May not provide link to campaign website (**Internet Usage Policy**)



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RESTRICTIONS ON THE SENATE OFFICE – LIMITED OVERLAP


- The following types of limited overlap between the Senate office and the campaign are permissible:
 - Official and campaign schedulers may coordinate
 - Official scheduler may not schedule campaign activities (e.g., RSVP to campaign events, book campaign travel)
 - Official communications staff may answer a few incidental campaign questions raised in an official briefing or interview
 - Senate office may not act as the campaign press operation
 - Senate office may provide a copy of public material to the campaign
 - Campaign may not reissue materials prepared by the Senate office

U.S. SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS CODE OF OFFICIAL CONDUCT TRAINING



**U.S. SENATE SELECT
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RESTRICTIONS ON THE SENATE OFFICE –
EVENTS

- Never wear both “hats” at the same time
- Mixed purpose travel is permissible, but if travel involves both campaign and official events, you must pro rate all expenses to accurately reflect the purpose of the trip
- Contact the Rules Committee for questions about reimbursable travel expenses
- Contact the FEC for questions about expenditures of campaign funds



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RESTRICTIONS ON THE SENATE OFFICE – MORATORIA

- 60 days prior to a primary or general election the following activities are prohibited:
 - Sending mass mailings
 - Using official funds for certain travel expenses
 - Using Senate television or recording studios
 - Using official funds to maintain a mobile office
 - Sending unsolicited mass email
 - Certain use of official social media and internet
- No moratorium for primary election if it is uncontested and there is *no legal possibility* for a write-in candidate
- Contact Rules Committee for additional guidance



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**CONSTITUENT
SERVICES**

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CODE OF OFFICIAL CONDUCT TRAINING



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GENERAL CASEWORK RULES

- Senators have broad discretion in assisting constituents
 - *May* request information, urge prompt consideration, arrange interviews or appointments, express judgments, call for reconsideration, or request a status report
 - *May not* provide special treatment or access for supporters, contributors, or friends
 - *May not* violate a rule of the relevant outside entity (e.g., *ex parte* communications)
 - *May not* intervene if an agency is engaged in an on-going enforcement, investigative, or other quasi-judicial proceeding
- Communications between Senators and constituents are considered confidential



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CONGRESSIONAL LIAISONS

- In assessing whether contacting an executive or independent agency is permissible, the Senate office should always contact the congressional liaison to:
 - Determine whether there are restrictions on outside communications regarding the matter at issue
 - Determine the appropriate point of contact
- Keep records of communications with liaisons



U.S. SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

FRANKING

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U.S. SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

FRANKING

- The frank is a facsimile of the Member's signature in the corner of an envelope that takes the place of a stamp and authorizes sending *official* material through the domestic mail without prepayment of postage
- Each Member is *personally* responsible for ensuring that his or her office's use of the frank complies with federal law, Senate Rules, and Committee regulations and rulings
- The remedy for misuse of the frank includes restitution from the *Member's personal funds*



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STANDARDS OF FRANKABILITY

- Generally, the frank may only be used to mail materials that concern "the official business, activities, and duties of the Congress" (**39 U.S.C. § 3210(a)**)
- The frank *may not* be used for personal or campaign related mail
- No mail matter that is not independently frankable may be inserted into a franked envelope
- Loaning the frank to an outside group is prohibited (**39 U.S.C. § 3215**)



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FRANKABLE MAIL

- Communication with any individual or government agency regarding programs, decisions, or any other related matters of public concern or public service, including Congressional actions
- Federal regulations or federal publications containing general information
- The *Congressional Record* (in whole or in part)
- Official newsletters and press releases
- Public service materials created exclusively with appropriated funds
- Questionnaires seeking public opinion
- Non-partisan voter registration or election information
- Mail between the D.C. office and home state offices
- Mail to other Members of Congress and other legislators
- Biographical material or pictures in federal publications or in response to a direct request
- Congratulations on a *public distinction*

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U.S. SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

NONFRANKABLE MAIL

- Solicitations for political support or financial assistance
- Mail containing certain partisan references
- Condolence letters sent to the public
- Holiday greetings, except for an incidental reference in otherwise frankable mail
- Messages about a Senator's family activities, other than in connection with official duties
- Messages to a Member on a personal rather than official basis
- Personal mail
- Congratulations on a *personal distinction*



U.S. SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

MASS MAILING

- A mass mailing is *500 or more substantially identical pieces of mail within one session of Congress*, regardless of whether the pieces are mailed at the same time
 - *Does not include*: mail in direct response; mail to other Members of Congress; mail to federal, state, or local officials; press releases; town meeting notices; federal publications or items provided to all Senators or made available for purchase with official funds for distribution; mail in response to a signed petition; and electronic communications
- *Must* be franked
- Subject to special restrictions on the size and number of pages, the number of times a Member's name may appear, and the size and content of photos
- Subject to the 60 day moratorium period



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CONTACT THE COMMITTEE

**If you have any questions,
please contact the Committee**

(202) 224-2981 (main) (202) 224-7416 (fax)

mailbox_office@ethics.senate.gov (email)

Committee guidance is confidential
