



SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Mass Mailing

Quick Reference

Definition of Mass Mailing

A mass mailing is a mailing of 500 or more pieces of substantially identical content whether mailed individually or in bulk, at the same or different times, within one session of Congress.

Mass Mailing Does Not Include

The following types of mail are not considered a mass mailing, even when the mailing consists of 500 or more pieces of substantially identical content:

- Mail in direct response sent no more than 120 days after the receipt of the original written request;
- Mail to other Members of Congress or officials of federal, state, or local governments;
- News releases to the media;
- Town meeting notices;*
- Federal publications or items provided to all Senators or made available for purchase with official funds for distribution;
- Responding to a signed petition; and
- Electronic communications.*

* Please consult the Rules Committee regarding the content of town hall meeting notices and electronic communications.

Mass Mailing Content Requirements

- Mailing must be no more than 2 sheets (front and back) of legal-sized (or smaller) paper or their equivalent.
- Information in the mailing must concern the views of or otherwise relate to the Senator.
- Information in the mailing may not be personal or partisan.
- Mailing may not contain biographical information unrelated to official business or activities.
- Personal references to the Senator must be limited to an average of 8 per page (*see definition below*).
- The Senator's name may not be in a font larger than ¼ of an inch, other than in the masthead.
- Mailing may contain no more than 4 photos of the Senator, excluding the masthead:
 - Photos of the Senator alone may be no larger than 12-square inches, and a picture of the Senator with others may be no larger than 20-square inches.
 - Photos must relate to the text of the mailing.
- Mailing must contain the phrase "PREPARED, PUBLISHED, AND MAILED AT TAXPAYER EXPENSE" in 7 point or larger font at the bottom of the first page.

Definition of "Personal Reference"

- A personal reference is any use of the Senator's name, title, or official position.
- Pronouns such as "I" or "me" do not count as personal references, nor does the frank itself.

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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Moratorium

- No mass mailing may be sent within 60 days immediately before biennial federal general elections.
- No mass mailing may be sent within 60 days immediately before the date of any primary or general election for any federal, state, or local office in which the Senator is a candidate, unless the election is uncontested and no legal possibility for a write-in candidate exists.
- Town meeting notices sent to more than 500 recipients may not be sent within 60 days immediately before the date of any primary or general election for any federal, state, or local office in which the Senator is a candidate—there is no exception for uncontested candidacies.

NOTE: The 60-day moratorium does not apply to mail sent under the frank of the chairman of a committee that relates to regular or normal business of the committee and does not unduly focus on the chairman.

Mass Mailing Procedural Requirements

- Mailings must be prepared by or for the Senator making the mailing.
- Mailings must be printed by the Office of Printing, Graphics and Direct Mail.
- Mailings must be sent under the frank.
- Mailings must be registered quarterly with the Office of Public Records.

Request for an Advisory Opinion

If you would like the Select Committee on Ethics to review a mass mailing prior to distribution, you must submit a final, full-sized version of the mailing for review.