



Compliance Notes – Vol. 1, Issue 21

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RECENT LOBBYING, ETHICS & CAMPAIGN FINANCE UPDATES

We read the news, cut through the noise and provide you the notes.

Welcome to *Compliance Notes* from Nossaman's **Government Relations & Regulation Group** – a periodic digest of the headlines, statutory and regulatory changes, and court cases involving campaign finance, lobbying compliance, election law, and government ethics issues at the federal, state, and local level.

Your attorneys, policy advisors, and compliance consultants are available to discuss any questions or how specific issues may impact your business.

If there is a particular subject or jurisdiction you'd like to see covered, please let us know.

Until then, please enjoy this installment of ***Compliance Notes***. If you would like to have these updates delivered directly to your in-box, please click below to subscribe to our Government Relations & Regulation mailing list.

Campaign Finance & Lobbying Compliance

West Virginia: More than 50 candidates in Mountain State races have pledged their support of “the strictest campaign finance legislation in the nation.” The bill, which is expected to be introduced in January, aims to break the “cycle of legalized corruption” that was identified in a 2014 study. The study found that the 200 most politically active companies in the U.S. spent \$5.8 billion influencing the government over a five year period and were awarded \$4.4 trillion in taxpayer support — earning a return of 750 times their investment. (Jessica Farrish, *The Register-Herald*)

Contribution Limits

California: San Bernardino Mayor John Valdivia vetoed a decision to support legislation that would set a yearly \$4,700 limit on how much someone can give a candidate for county or city office. (Brian Whitehead, *San Bernardino Sun*)

Elections

Colorado: A federal judge temporarily barred the U.S. Postal Service from sending an election mailer that state Attorney General Phil Weiser and Secretary of State Jena Griswold argued contained false or misleading information about Colorado's mail-in ballots. The Postal Service says the decision was too late, as most post cards have already been sent. (Sam Tabachnik, *Denver Post*; Erik Larson, *Bloomberg*)

Florida: A federal appeals court overturned a judge's ruling that people with felony convictions don't have to pay off all court fees and fines before voting, dealing a setback to advocates for 2018's Amendment 4. In a 6-4 ruling, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit ruled that the plaintiffs did not prove a violation of the U.S. Constitution. The plaintiffs included more than a dozen people with felony convictions who accused Gov. Ron DeSantis and Florida lawmakers of imposing a "poll tax" by requiring them to pay off all court-ordered costs relating to their felony convictions before voting. (Lawrence Mower, *Tampa Bay Times*)
Meanwhile, in **North Carolina**, the Wake County Superior Court dramatically expanded the number of voters eligible to participate in the 2020 election by ruling that the state may not disenfranchise citizens who owe fines, fees and other debts due to a felony conviction. (Mark Joseph Stern, *Slate.com*)

Montana: The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals denied a request for an emergency injunction to allow Montana Green Party candidates to appear on the November ballot. "It looks as if the fat lady has finally sung and I will not be on the (Senate District) 47 ballot in November as a Green Party candidate," Gary Marbut wrote. (AP News)

North Dakota: In a unanimous decision, the state Supreme Court blocked Measure 3, an initiative seeking to reshape the state's election process, from making it to the November ballot. The high court found that petitioners engaged in deceptive practices while collecting signatures by omitting key information when presenting the measure to voters. (Courthouse News Service)

Ohio: President Trump's re-election campaign, the Republican National Committee and the Ohio Republican Party filed documents to intervene and oppose a lawsuit seeking to prevent a push for multiple drop boxes for absentee ballots in counties across the state. (John Caniglia, *cleveland.com*)

Government Ethics

Massachusetts: Select Demo Services LLC, a New Hampshire contracting company, will pay a \$75,000 fine to Massachusetts after the Office of Campaign and Political Finance determined it illegally provided corporate funds to employees for \$21,000 worth of donations they made to the campaigns of Boston Mayor Martin Walsh and a city councilor. Donations made by personal check were dated on or about Dec. 4, 2019. Select Demo had issued \$1,000 checks to each of those workers on or about Dec. 3, 2019. (Chris Lisinski, State House News Service)