



Compliance Notes – Vol. 1, Issue 23

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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

Florida: The U.S. Justice Department's Public Integrity Section is investigating a former Florida congresswoman, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, accused of spending at least \$50,000 in campaign money on vacations and restaurant and luxury hotel bills. (Associated Press)

New Mexico: Council for a Competitive New Mexico, a group that spent \$134,000 on political advertisements targeting several progressive Democrats in the run-up to the June primary election, was ordered by the New Mexico Secretary of State to disclose its donors within 10 days or face possible civil

penalties. (Dan Boyd, *Albuquerque Journal*)

New York: The Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) issued an Advisory Opinion regarding the permissibility of gifts given to third parties at the solicitation of public officials, how to identify such gifts, and how to determine whether the presumption of impermissibility can be overcome by examining the circumstances surrounding the gifts. (Joint Commission on Public Ethics, Advisory Opinion)

Elections

A federal judge in Pennsylvania became the fourth to issue a nationwide injunction against the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) over disruptive operational changes initiated by Postmaster General Louis DeJoy. The judge said mail service “dropped precipitously” after DeJoy began his tenure this year. Another judge noted that 72% of the decommissioned high-speed mail-sorting machines were located in counties where Hillary Clinton got the most votes in 2016. In response to one of the injunctions, DeJoy said that it should be amended to acknowledge that the hundreds of high-speed mail-sorting machines that were taken apart this year cannot be reassembled. The USPS has said it is prepared for the election and repeatedly denied that the operational changes instituted in July were intended to help Trump. (Erik Larson, *Bloomberg*; *Bloomberg News*)

Florida: Attorney General Ashley Moody asked state and federal law enforcement to investigate possible election law violations after billionaire and former Democratic presidential candidate Mike Bloomberg helped raise more than \$16 million for Florida felons to pay their fines and court fees so they can vote in the presidential election. Gov. Ron DeSantis had asked Moody to review allegations that Bloomberg and the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition had violated the law by offering incentives for voting. (Brendan Farrington, *AP News*)

Texas: Less than three weeks before early voting begins in Texas, a U.S. district judge has blocked the state from eliminating straight-ticket voting as an option for people who go to the polls this November. (Alex Samuels, *Texas Tribune*)

Political Speech & Campaign Advertisements

Facebook identified a range of fake accounts pushing information intended to both help and hurt President Trump’s re-election chances and said it was removing the accounts for violating its policy against “inauthentic behavior.” The activity originated in China, though the Chinese have denied allegations they are seeking to influence the vote in November. (Adam Goldman, Sheera Frenkel and Julian E. Barnes, *New York Times*)

President Trump said the government is eyeing “concrete legal steps” against social media sites that he alleges are censoring conservatives online. (Tony Romm, *Washington Post*)