



# Compliance Notes - Vol. 1, Issue 35

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## RECENT LOBBYING, ETHICS & CAMPAIGN FINANCE UPDATES

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

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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.

Our 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**

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Shana M. Broussard, Sean J. Cooksey and Allen Dickerson have been sworn in as members of the Federal Election Commission. (FEC, Press Release)

U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet introduced the Zeroing Out Money for Buying Influence after Elections (ZOMBIE) Act to address what happens with campaign money for federal candidates when they leave office. He explained, "It makes no sense for former politicians to have millions in the bank from their old campaigns, especially after they've registered to become a lobbyist or foreign agent. These zombie accounts help fuel

the pay-to-play culture in Washington that is destroying the American people's faith in our government." The ZOMBIE Act requires candidates to close campaign accounts within six months of not filing to run for reelection or another federal office. They would also need to close their personal or leadership committees before registering as a lobbyist or foreign agent. Candidates may divest their unspent money to donors, the U.S. Treasury or a charity. The candidate or their family may not have personal ties to the recipient's charity. (Michael Karlik, *Colorado Politics*)

**New Mexico:** The New Mexico Ethics Commission filed a lawsuit aimed at forcing the Council for a Competitive New Mexico to disclose its donors. The Council spent more than \$130,000 on political advertisements in hotly-contested Democratic legislative primary election races. The lawsuit is the first of its kind, as the Ethics Commission was created just this year. It will also be a test case for a law that was amended in 2019 to increase "dark money" disclosure for election-related expenditures. (Dan Boyd, *Albuquerque Journal*)

**Washington:** Seattle City Council approved an ordinance requiring certain groups attempting to affect Seattle legislation to register with the city and disclose their donors. Those that spend at least \$750 in a month or \$1,500 in three months "presenting a program to the public" will now need to register and report. The rules are set to take effect in about six months. (Daniel Beekman, *The Seattle Times*)

## Government Ethics

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**Tennessee:** The Knox County Ethics Committee bylaws could be changed to shield people running for office from complaints during an election cycle. The Committee will be discussing the new protection for candidates in February and making a recommendation to the County Commissioners. (Tyler Whetstone, *Knoxville News Sentinel*)

**Washington, DC:** In 2018, the District of Columbia Council adopted the Campaign Finance Reform Amendment Act banning political contributions from government contractors seeking, entering or executing contracts valued at \$250,000 or more on or after November 4, 2020. The 2021 budget, however, postponed implementation indefinitely and entities seeking and holding contracts with the District and their senior officers may continue to make political contributions to District officials until further notice.