



Compliance Notes - Vol. 2, Issue 26

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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.

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

Following the U.S. Department of Justice's increased enforcement of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), especially with respect to foreign-owned media entities, China, Qatar and Russia now rank as the three countries that have spent the most on foreign lobbying based on reports filed with the DOJ FARA unit. (Anna Massoglia & Maggie Hicks, OpenSecrets.org)

A federal PAC, End Citizens United, filed a lawsuit seeking judicial review of the Federal Election Commission's dismissal of a complaint alleging that former-President Donald Trump and his campaign

illegally solicited funds for a Super PAC. (Karl Evers-Hillstron, *The Hill*)

Arizona: The state senate voted to spend \$500,000 to create an “Unreported In-Kind Political Contributions Task Force Fund” to investigate whether the practices of social media platforms and search engines violate state campaign finance laws. (Howard Fischer, KAWC)

Georgia: The Georgia Government Transparency & Campaign Finance Commission voted to continue an investigation into whether the former state senate majority leader, Sen. Chip Rogers, misused leftover campaign funds for personal expenses such as trips to Six Flags and purchases at a luxury car dealership. Rogers’ attorney claims that such funds were lawfully refunded to Rogers as a repayment of a candidate loan. (James Salzer, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*)

Illinois: As part of a recent campaign finance and ethics reform package signed into law, Illinois will now explicitly permit campaign funds to be used for childcare expenses for a candidate. (Rachel Hinton, *Chicago Sun-Times*)

Louisiana: The governor signed into law a bill that removed limits on PAC contributions to candidates, which had previously been \$80,000 for major state offices and less for others. (AP News)

Maine: Governor Mills signed into law a number of election and campaign finance reform bills, including one that defines a state leadership PAC and bars business entities from making contributions to them or to candidates. (Katherine Revello, *Maine Wire*)

Rhode Island: Although he won the election in 2018 for state representative, Laufton Ascencao never took office because he pleaded *nolo contendere* to charges that he filed false campaign reports and embezzled money from the Rhode Island Chapter of the Sierra Club, where he was treasurer, to pay for his campaign’s expenses. (*The NonProfit Times*)

Government Ethics & Transparency

Colorado: A select Senate ethics committee will review allegations that state Senator Bob Gardner violated conflict of interest rules by contacting the State Court Administrator to convey a constituent’s complaints about a judge in a divorce proceeding. (Marianne Goodland, *Colorado Politics*)

Voting & Ballot Measures

Georgia: The U.S. Department of Justice has sued the state of Georgia, seeking to strike down the state’s new election law on grounds that it makes it harder to vote. (Mark Niesse & Greg Bluestein, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*)

Arizona: In 2022, voters in Arizona will decide a ballot measure that could allow the state legislature to amend or repeal voter-approved ballot initiatives in cases where the Arizona Supreme Court or U.S. Supreme Court declare that a portion of the ballot initiative is unconstitutional or illegal. (Ryan Byrne, *Ballotpedia News*)