



Compliance Notes - Vol. 3, Issue 25

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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

Florida: A U.S. District Court judge in Tallahassee struck down a Florida law that limited to \$3,000 contributions to people or political committees sponsoring or opposing ballot initiatives, ruling it violated the First Amendment. The contribution limit would have made passing ballot initiatives that amend the Florida Constitution more cumbersome. While the Florida Elections Commission argued the law limited the potential for fraud and corruption, the Court said those concerns do not legally justify the restriction at issue. (AP News)

Government Ethics & Transparency

Missouri: The Missouri Supreme Court has asked Eric Schmitt—the state’s attorney general and candidate for U.S. Senate—to stop using photos of three of the court’s judges in a mailer supporting his campaign for Congress. A member of Schmitt’s staff took the photo depicting Schmitt alongside the judges during Missouri’s bicentennial celebration last August. The judges, who attended the celebration in their official capacity, were unaware that the photo would be used in such a context. Since Missouri’s Constitution prohibits Supreme Court judges from engaging in any political activity, the Court said the judges would never consent to their names, titles or likeness being used in any political context. The Court has asked Schmitt’s office to delete the photo and others like it from his public and social media accounts. (David Medina, *KSHB 41*)

New York: The deans of New York’s 15 accredited law schools announced a rigorous nominating process to select members of the new Commission on Ethics in Lobbying in Government, that was created to overhaul the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE), the existing state ethics panel that will be dismantled on July 8. The new 11-member state ethics commission is designed to eliminate the political influence that maligned the JCOPE, whose commissioners were appointed by New York’s top lawmakers with little vetting or review of independence and impartiality. The new process ensures nominees undergo thorough background checks and enables the nominating committee—comprised of law schools deans—to reject a candidate who is not found to have “undisputed honesty, integrity and character.” (Brendan J. Lyons, *Times Union*)

Legislation

A bipartisan group of lawmakers in the U.S. House of Representatives introduced the Fighting Foreign Influence Act, a bill comprised of a trio of measures aimed at curbing foreign influence in U.S. democracy. The bill’s three main provisions would (1) compel tax-exempt groups—including think tanks—to disclose foreign donations and gifts, (2) impose a lifetime ban on select former U.S. officials from lobbying for a foreign government or political party, and (3) require political campaigns to verify that donors have a valid U.S. address. The proposed measures respond to growing concerns that critical components of the government and society remain vulnerable to foreign interference. (Isaac Stanley-Becker, *The Washington Post*) (The Bill)