



# Compliance Notes - Vol. 4, 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.

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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Two former executives of a defense contractor based in Hawaii pleaded guilty to participating in a scheme to funnel more than \$200,000 in illegal campaign contributions to benefit U.S. Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) during the 2020 election. According to the indictment, the executives used company funds to donate tens of thousands of dollars to Collins during her bid for reelection, including through a shell company intended to conceal their identity. The executives also recruited family members to donate directly to Collins' campaign after they themselves reached the contribution limits. A spokesperson for Collins' campaign stated there were no allegations of wrongdoing on the part of the campaign. (Nick Grube, *Honolulu Civil Beat*)

**Massachusetts:** The state Supreme Judicial Court upheld former Attorney General Maura Healey's decision to reject a petition to put a question on the 2024 ballot asking voters to limit contributions to super PACs and other groups. There are currently no limits on contributions to super PACs, and the proposal called for voter approval to set a \$500 limit on individual contributions to PACs and \$5,000 to independent expenditure committees. The justices ruled the case was "moot" because the referendum's proponents did not adhere to the state's timelines for gathering the required number of voter signatures to qualify for the ballot. (Christian M. Wade, *The Eagle-Tribune*)

**New Hampshire:** A bill that would increase oversight of political advocacy organizations unanimously passed the Senate and is headed to Governor Chris Sununu for signature. House Bill 195 would expand the organizations that would count as political advocacy organizations and therefore incur registration and reporting obligations. Currently, organizations that spend \$5,000 on advocacy for or against a candidate or party in an election cycle qualify as a political advocacy organization. Under the bill, organizations that spend \$2,500 or more would count as a political advocacy organization. (Ethan Dewitt, *New Hampshire Bulletin*)

**Oregon:** Election officials will fine the Democratic Party of Oregon \$15,000 and request the state attorney general to investigate the cryptocurrency executive who gave the party \$500,000 last year under a false name. The Elections Division of the Secretary of State's Office made the announcement following the conclusion of a seven-month investigation into the \$500,000 contribution made by Nishad Singh, an executive at the cryptocurrency exchange FTX. The Democratic Party of Oregon initially reported that a Las Vegas-based cryptocurrency startup was the source of the contribution, later identifying the true donor in an amended report. (Julia Shumway, *Oregon Capital Chronicle*)

## **Government Ethics & Transparency**

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The House of Representatives voted to refer a resolution to expel Rep. George Santos (R-N.Y.) from Congress to the Ethics Committee, effectively killing the measure. The bill passed 221-204, largely along party lines, with all Republicans voting for the GOP motion. Senators expect the committee to act in the next two months. (Andrew Solender, *Axios*)