



Compliance Notes - Vol. 5, Issue 13

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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

Pennsylvania: Philadelphia's Board of Ethics has proposed amendments to the city's campaign finance regulations that would limit super PACs coordinated spending before a candidate officially announces their campaign. The revisions would clarify that expenditures related to pre-candidacy coordination are in-kind contributions and subject to campaign contribution limits. The Board's proposed amendments aim to prevent future candidates from using the same strategies as the super PAC supporting former mayoral candidate Jeff Brown. Brown delayed the announcement of his candidacy, and the super PAC spent millions of dollars on TV advertising and other election activities without violating campaign contribution limits. (Meir Rinde, *Billy Penn* & Amendment To Regulation No. 1)

Wisconsin: Three county prosecutors cited a conflict of interest in declining to pursue felony charges against a fundraising committee for Donald Trump and a Republican state lawmaker in an alleged scheme to evade campaign finance laws surrounding an effort to unseat one of the most powerful Republicans in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Ethics Commission alleges Trump's Save America political action committee, GOP Rep. Janel Brandtjen, county Republican party officials and the campaign committee of Adam Steen—who ran against Robin Vos in 2022—conspired to avoid state fundraising limits for Steen's bid to replace Assembly Speaker Vos. The district attorneys in Chippewa, Florence and Langlade counties all cited a conflict of interest in deciding not to take up the charges recommended to them by the commission. On Friday, the commission voted to refer the same charges to prosecutors in adjacent counties instead. (Molly Beck, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*)

Government Ethics & Transparency

New Mexico: About one week after early voting in New Mexico's primary elections begins, a new law, House Bill 182, will go into effect requiring political campaigns and candidates to tell the public whenever they use false information generated by artificial intelligence in a campaign ad. While the Secretary of State's Office will take complaints about the new disclosure requirements in the law, they will often refer the complaints to the state Ethics Commission because they fall under an agreement between the two agencies. Since the bill does not specify an effective date, spend money, or contain an emergency clause, it will go into effect on May 15, 2024, 90 days after the end of the 2024 legislative session. (Austin Fisher, *Source NM*)

Wisconsin: A jury found a former Milwaukee election official, accused of obtaining fake absentee ballots, guilty Wednesday of misconduct in office and fraud, rejecting her arguments that she was trying to expose vulnerabilities in the state's election system. Kimberly Zapata was serving as deputy director at the Milwaukee Election Commission in October 2022 when she used her work-issued laptop to obtain three military absentee ballots using fake names and Social Security numbers, according to a criminal complaint. She sent the ballots to Republican state Rep. Janel Brandtjen, an election conspiracy theorist, two weeks before the state's gubernatorial and legislative elections. Prosecutors charged Zapata in November 2022 with one felony count of misconduct in public office and three misdemeanor counts of election fraud. Zapata faces up to five years in prison when she is sentenced on May 2, 2024. (Todd Richmond, *AP News*)