



# Compliance Notes - Vol. 5, Issue 16

04.17.2024

## 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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**Illinois:** A bill pending in the Illinois House would require lobbyists to disclose how much they are paid by each of their clients. For decades, lobbyists in the Illinois Statehouse have been required to report how much they spend wining, dining and entertaining lawmakers. However, currently there is no law requiring lobbyists to disclose how much they are paid by corporations, industry groups or other special interest organizations. This would change under House Bill 4591, an initiative of Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias. HB 4591 would also give the secretary broader authority to enforce state laws governing the lobbying business, including the authority to investigate suspected violations of the act, to compel the production of documents and testimony as part of an investigation and to review books and records of individuals

applying to renew their lobbyist registrations. (Peter Hancock, *Capitol News Illinois*)

**Kentucky:** The Kentucky Legislative Ethics Commission sent a notice regarding loss of data from their database for lobbyists and lobbyist employers, dating back to March 18, 2024. **Any online filings made since March 18 will need to be refiled.** The next monthly report would typically be due on April 15, but the state has issued an extension to April 30. If a filing is made in April after the normal due date, a late notice may be generated— but can be ignored— and the Commission will delete it. Kentucky requires monthly lobbying disclosures for periods covering January through April, and then every four months after that. (Notice – Kentucky Legislative Ethics Commission)

## Government Ethics & Transparency

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On Monday, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in *Snyder v. United States*, a case involving illegal gratuities paid to a local government official. James Snyder, the former mayor of a northwest Indiana town, was convicted by a jury of receiving \$13,000 from a trucking company after it was awarded city contracts. The case centers on the scope of 18 U.S.C. 666, which makes it a crime for certain state or local officials to “corruptly” accept anything of value over \$5,000. The question for the justices is whether the law covers “gratuities” paid in recognition of past actions, or only quid pro quo bribery, meaning a tit-for-tat agreement. The Court appeared likely to side with the mayor and continue to pare back the reach of federal corruption statutes. (Kimberly Strawbridge Robinson, *Bloomberg Law*)

**Michigan:** Former Romulus Mayor LeRoy Burcroff used campaign funds to help pay for his daughter’s yacht club wedding, his yacht club dues and a Florida vacation with friends, and will avoid serving time in prison despite his guilty plea. In 2022, Burcroff pleaded guilty to wire fraud, admitting he used campaign funds to help cover his daughter’s yacht club wedding. Federal prosecutors had requested that Burcroff serve 14 months for betraying the public’s trust by using more than \$15,000 in campaign money for personal spending. The federal judge, however, sentenced the convicted ex-politician to three years’ probation and four months’ home confinement, sparing him the prison sentence sought by the government. (Tresa Baldas, *Detroit Free Press*)

**New York:** Attorney General Letitia James announced that “conspiracy theorists” who used a robocall campaign to deter Black residents in New York from voting by mail would pay \$1 million for wrongdoing. According to the attorney general’s office, Jacob Wohl and Jack Burkman used their organization, Project 1559, to “threaten and harass” Black communities with robocalls, including disinformation about having personal information of mail-in voters “disseminated to law enforcement, debt collectors and the government.” The calls falsely claimed that voters could be tracked with mail-in ballots to force mandatory vaccination by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, according to the office of the attorney general. The agreement, which came after a federal judge found Wohl and Burkman were liable for targeting black New Yorkers with misinformation and threats to discourage voting, includes the \$1 million judgment that will be to the attorney general’s office, the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation and individual plaintiffs. (Molly Burke, *Times Union*)