

**Issue Editors:**

Ronald M. Jacobs
rmjacobs@Venable.com
202.344.8215

Lawrence H. Norton
lhnorton@Venable.com
202.344.4541

Political Law Resources:**Political Law Briefing Blog**

Venable's Government Affairs Compliance Tune-Up Webinar [Audio](#) and [Slides](#)

Venable's Political Law 101 Webinar [Audio](#) and [Slides](#)

2013-2014 Federal Contribution Limits

Venable attorneys regularly publish commentary and analysis on our blog, [Political Law Briefing](#). For your convenience, we have assembled our most popular blog posts from January 2014.

Note: You Can Still Tune-Up on Government Affairs Compliance

In case you missed our January 16 webinar on government affairs compliance featuring [Ronald M. Jacobs](#), [Lawrence H. Norton](#), and [Alexandra Megaris](#), you can click [here](#) for the recording and [here](#) for the presentation materials. We covered topics including:

- Creative ways to be involved in the political process;
- Operating a compliant PAC;
- Federal and state lobbying compliance;
- Pay-to-play laws that affect business with state and local governments;
- New efforts to force transparency on companies and nonprofits, and
- Enforcement trends.

FPPC Goes After More Committees in Its "Dark Money" Case

Author: [Ronald M. Jacobs](#)

As we [reported](#) in November, the [California Fair Political Practices Commission](#) reached a settlement agreement with two entities (Center to Protect Patient Rights and Americans for Responsible Leadership) involved in a 2012 ballot measure. Those entities agreed to pay a \$1 million fine. The FPPC said that it would require the entities that received the contributions, California Future Fund for Free Markets and the Small Business Action Committee (the bottom-most entities on this [chart](#)), to disgorge the contributions they received from AFF and ARL (a total of about \$15 million), even though they did nothing wrong.

The FPPC made good on its threat...[\(Click to continue reading\)](#).

Note: A prior version of this email incorrectly stated that American Future Fund had entered into a settlement with the FPPC.

Down But Not Out: IRS Cites Political Activity in Denying Groups Tax-Exempt Status

Author: [Lawrence H. Norton](#)

The IRS recently denied tax-exempt status to two organizations based on their political activities. The two groups – whose names have been redacted from letters released by the agency – sought tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(4), which is reserved for “social welfare” groups whose primary purpose is to benefit the general community.

Controversy has been swirling around campaign spending...[\(Click to continue reading\)](#).

Outside Earned Income

Author: [Ronald M. Jacobs](#)

House staff that are paid above a certain rate are limited in the amount of outside income they may receive. The [House Ethics Committee announced](#) on January 22 that the rate of pay for 2014 that triggers the limits is \$120,749 or \$10,062 a month. Anyone earning that rate for more than 90 days is subject to the limit. For 2014, the limit on outside earned income remains at \$26,955.

This often comes up when Congressional staff also do compensable work...[\(Click to continue reading\)](#).

Business Owners as Candidates: Wrestling with Personal and Corporate Issues

Author: [Ronald M. Jacobs](#)

When the owner of a business runs for public office, he or she has to be careful not to use the assets of the business for the campaign. In the past, this issue has come up when the business owner uses money from a business account, uses customer mailing lists, or business equipment in a campaign. Prepaying the company for services, renting lists at fair-market value, or taking an authorized distribution are some ways to avoid illegal corporate contributions.

The FEC recently dealt with a novel argument...[\(Click to continue reading\)](#).

Limiting Lobbying: The DC Circuit says “not so fast.”

Author: [Ronald M. Jacobs](#)

One of the ways that President Obama tried to restrict the influence of lobbyists in Washington was to ban all registered lobbyists from serving on [federal advisory committees](#). A group of lobbyists who wanted to serve on some Industry Trade Advisory Committees (“ITAC”), a specific type of federal advisory committee, sued the administration. They argued that the government was infringing on their constitutionally protected right to lobby. The trial court [rejected](#) their arguments and dismissed the case.

Undeterred, the lobbyists appealed...[\(Click to continue reading\)](#).

First Order of Business for Governor McAuliffe: Limits on Gifts to Public Officials

Author: [Alexandra Megaris](#)

Virginia was one of the few states with no limits on gifts to public officials. However, in the wake of well-publicized gift scandals from the prior administration, just moments after being sworn in as Virginia’s 72nd governor on January 11, Governor McAuliffe signed an executive order imposing new gift restrictions on Executive Branch employees and officers and their immediate family members.

The highlights of Executive Order Number 2 include...[\(Click to continue reading\)](#).

Upping the Contribution Limit on the Upper Peninsula (and elsewhere): Michigan Enacts Changes to its Campaign Finance Laws

Authors: [Craig Ready](#), [Ronald M. Jacobs](#), and [Lawrence H. Norton](#)

Recently, Michigan followed [several states](#) by increasing both contribution limits and frequency of disclosure from candidates. The [bill](#), which took effect immediately, also includes new identification requirements for persons or groups paying for robocalls while exempting so-called “issue-ads” and their donors from being disclosed in campaign finance reports.

The new law doubles contribution limits...[\(Click to continue reading\)](#).

Upcoming Events

Lobbying 101 - With the Association of Government Relations Professionals

Monday, February 10, 2014

This Lobbying Certificate Program course is designed to give you the fundamental skills and information to start your government relations career on the right foot. Information covered includes how a lobbyist can be most effective for their clients, best practices for communicating with Congress, building and maintaining your professional network, and fundamental ethical and legal compliance for government relations professionals.

[Click here](#) to learn more and register.

Election-Year Advocacy: Maintaining Your Nonprofit's Clear Message in Cloudy Legal Seas

Tuesday, April 29, 2014

With another election year upon us, it is time to think about how your nonprofit organization can maximize its efforts to affect the political process. But, with the IRS considering new rules, and states imposing new disclosure requirements—sometimes retroactively—nonprofits need to understand how to play by the rules, even as they are changing.

[Click here](#) to learn more.

[Click here](#) to subscribe to Venable's Political Law Briefing blog and receive the Venable team's insight and analysis as soon as it is posted.

Visit Venable's political law blog at www.politicallawbriefing.com.

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