

Policy Alert

January 4, 2017

2017 Political Law Update

As we enter the new year, please note the following recent changes made to state and federal lobbying, gift and campaign finance laws:

Federal: Effective January 1, 2017, federal executive branch employees must obtain permission to attend “widely attended events” in writing from the designated agency ethics officer rather than relying on a verbal approval. Additionally, political contribution limits for individuals and nonmulticandidate political action committees (PACs) will be adjusted for inflation in Q1 2017 for the 2017-2018 election cycle.

California: California’s Fair Political Practices Commission approved amended regulations that will increase the annual gift limit from \$460 to \$470 as of January 1, 2017. Registered lobbyists remain subject to the \$10 per month gift limit.

Florida: The Florida House of Representatives enacted new rules applicable to lobbyists that will come into effect at the start of the next session. Lobbyists will now be required to disclose the specific issues on which they are lobbying as part of the registration process, members of the Legislature must wait six years after leaving the House before they can become registered lobbyists, and members of the state House may no longer accept private plane travel from a lobbyist or a corporation employing lobbyists.

Missouri: Voters in Missouri approved a constitutional amendment placing new limits on campaign contributions. Most significantly, the amendment, which took effect December 8, 2016, prohibits corporations and labor unions from making direct campaign contributions to state candidates, campaign committees and political parties in Missouri. The amendment also limits contributions from individuals and PACs to \$2,600 per election to state candidates and \$25,000 per election to state party committees. Prior to the passage of the amendment, since 2008, corporations and labor unions could contribute unlimited amounts to state-level political committees in Missouri.

New Hampshire: The gift limit for members of the Legislature has been doubled from \$25 to \$50. The new rule went into effect December 7, 2016.

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