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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

Giffords, a gun control nonprofit founded by former Rep. Gabby Giffords (D-AZ), sued the National Rifle Association (NRA) in a rare third-party campaign finance case that was permitted after the Federal Election Commission (FEC) failed to take action as ordered by a federal court. The lawsuit alleges the NRA carried out a multimillion-dollar political coordination effort benefiting Donald Trump and other Republicans. Giffords filed numerous complaints against the NRA with the FEC. They went unanswered for so long that, back in September, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ordered the FEC to take action within 30 days. When the FEC failed to comply with the court’s directive, the court issued an order allowing Giffords the
right to sue the NRA itself. (Caitlin Oprysko, *Politico*)

**Washington:** The Washington State Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) says "Washougal Moms," a group formed in May to defend mothers accused of disrupting a Washougal School Board meeting, must register as a political action committee. The PDC says the group solicited and accepted contributions, expressed support and opposition to political candidates and received an in-kind contribution to place signs around the community, which amount to actions that meet the state's registration requirements. The PDC also says the group must disclose financial backers, report financial contributions and expenditures and include disclaimers on advertisements. (Doug Flanagan, *The Columbian*)

**Government Ethics & Transparency**

**Illinois:** Former state Rep. Luis Arroyo pleaded guilty to a bribery scheme involving efforts to expand sweepstakes gaming machines. The indictment alleged James Weiss, the owner of a company specializing in sweepstakes gaming machines, paid bribes to Arroyo in exchange for Arroyo's promotion of legislation benefitting Weiss' company. Prosecutors alleged Weiss paid the bribes via off-the-books lobbying payments, which Arroyo failed to report to state regulators. The indictment further alleged that Weiss and Arroyo conspired to pay a state senator $2,500 in kickbacks in exchange for the senator's support on beneficial legislation. (Jason Meisner and Ray Long, *Chicago Tribune*)

**Wisconsin:** A state circuit court judge ordered Assembly Speaker Robin Vos to turn over records regarding Republicans' secretive review of the 2020 election. The judge ruled that Vos and the team conducting the election review must release calendars, emails, internal reports and other documents. (Patrick Marley, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*)

**Elections**

**Pennsylvania:** In a radio interview, Governor Tom Wolf revealed that his wife dropped off his mail ballot, thereby violating state election law that prohibits anyone other than the voter from returning a mail ballot. The violation carries a punishment of one year in prison, a $1,000 fine or both. (Danielle Ohl, *Spotlight PA*)

**Utah:** In the November 2nd election, ranked-choice voting made its debut across twenty-one municipalities. Preliminary results suggest the new system went well, while candidates expressed concerns about the process and acknowledged the benefits. (Kyle Dunphrey, *Deseret News*)