



Mass Mailing Checklist

FRANKING COMMISSION APPROVAL IS REQUIRED BEFORE YOU MAIL

A mass mailing is a mailing of 500 or more pieces of substantially identical content whether mailed singly or in bulk, or at the same or different times, over the course of a session of Congress.

A single drop mass mailing is a mailing of 500 or more pieces of substantially identical content mailed on the same day.

SPECIFIC LAWS APPLICABLE TO MASS MAILINGS

- Prior** to making any mass mailing, a sample of the mail matter must be submitted to the Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards (Franking Commission) for an advisory opinion on the compliance of such mail matter with franking guidelines.
- All preparation costs must be paid from appropriated funds.
- The statement “This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense” must appear on the face of the mail matter, on the address side of the envelope, on the mailing panel, or on page 1 of a letter; this statement must be prominently displayed and printed with font no smaller than 7 point.
- When mailed by a Member office, the mailing may not be mailed to persons residing outside the district the Member currently represents and may not be mailed at all during the 90 days prior to an election in which the Member’s name will appear on a ballot for election to any public office.
- When mailed by a Committee office, it may not be mailed into a Member’s district during the 90 days prior to an election in which that Member’s name will appear on a ballot for election to any public office except that chairman of a committee may make such a mailing when the mailing is ordinary and necessary to conduct the normal and regular business of the committee.

CONTENT OF OFFICIAL MAIL

- Official mail *may include*:
 1. Matter which directly or indirectly pertain to the legislative process, congressional representational functions in general, the functioning, working, or operation the Congress and the performance of official duties in connection therewith including, but not limited to, the conveying of information to the public about such matters and the requesting of the views of the public, or the views and information of other authorities of government, as a guide or a means of assistance in the performance of said functions;
 2. Matters of public concern or public service, including but not limited to any matter relating to actions of a past or current Congress and the impact of laws and decisions on state and local governments and individual citizens;
 3. Reports on public and official actions taken by the Member; and
 4. Discussions of proposed or pending legislation or governmental actions and the position of the Member and/or the Congress on, and arguments for or against, such matters.
- Official mail may *not* include:
 1. Matter which is personal or biographical of a Member, staff, or constituent;
 2. Personal (birthday, anniversary, wedding, birth, retirement, condolence, etc.) or holiday greetings;
 3. References to campaigns or elections except in a legislative context;
 4. Matter which is partisan or political in fact or tone;
 5. Comments critical of another person which are partisan or political in fact or tone;
 6. Solicitations, direct or indirect, on behalf of any other person or organization;

7. Solicitations, direct or indirect, of support for the Member's position on a legislative, public policy or community issue;
8. Matter in support of grassroots organizing or lobbying activities, including matter which generates or circulates a petition or equivalent.
9. Matter which directly or indirectly advertises, promotes, endorses or otherwise provides a benefit to any person or organization not entitled to use the frank; and
10. Matter that is generally not germane to the conduct of the official business of the Congress.

PERSONAL REFERENCES, POLITICAL REFERENCES & FORMATTING

- The appearance of personal references to a Member are limited to an average of 8 per page/panel. A personal reference is any appearance of the Member's name, title, or official positions and the pronouns "I" and "me". Appearances do not count in the first instance in a banner head or photo caption, as a signature on a letter or message, as the frank, or when integral to an address (website, email, etc.).
- The Member's name may appear up to 1/2" in height in one instance; all subsequent appearances may not exceed 1/4" in height.
- The mail matter may include one (official head shot) of the Member; the size photo may not exceed 6% of the surface or the page/panel on which it appears or 6 square inches, whichever is less.
- There may only be two photos per page/panel in which the Member is pictured; the size of these photos, in aggregate, may not exceed 20% of the surface of the page/panel on which they appear or 24 square inches, whichever is less.
- When the Member appears in a photo with others the others must be clearly visible and the official business being conducted by the Member, as depicted in the photo, must be described and referenced in the accompanying text or corresponding caption.
- The appearance of party labels or the names of party personalities is limited to two per party/personality per page/panel; party labels (except when integral with the title of a House leadership office or organization) or the names of party personalities may not appear in head/lead/or bolded lines or photo captions.

LOCATION OF THE MEMBER'S FRANK

- The Member's frank (the Member's signature with the initials "M.C." printed immediately below) must appear in the upper right hand corner and official return address must appear in the upper left hand corner of the mailing panel, envelope, or label.

REQUESTING AN ADVISORY OPINION

- To request an Advisory Opinion, submit to the Commission a sample of the mail matter and a completed Advisory Opinion Request Form, and Member Office Franking Certification Form with appropriate signatures.
- The sample of the communication matter must be a formatted copy in actual size and color.
- If revisions are required to bring the communication into full compliance with applicable law, House Rule, and precedent, a revised sample incorporating the requested revisions must be submitted for review and consideration *prior* to the matter being distributed.

CONTACT THE FRANKING COMMISSION BEFORE YOU PRINT!!!

Office of the Majority: Telephone (202) 226-0647; Fax (202) 226-0047
 Office of the Minority: Telephone (202) 225-9337; Fax (202) 225-7664