

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
119th CONGRESS
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION 119-26

Resolution to Amend the *Members' Congressional Handbook*

Be it resolved, pursuant to clauses 1(k)(1), (6), and (9) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives that the Committee on House Administration adopt the following regulations amending and superseding the relevant portions of the prior regulations known collectively as the *Members' Congressional Handbook*.

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

Under section titled “General,” strike item 12 and insert the following:

“12. Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1913, unless expressly authorized by Congress, the MRA may not be used to directly or indirectly fund grassroots lobbying activities designed to influence policy or officials. Contact the Communications Standards Commission for more information.”

SECTION II. STAFF

- A. Under subsection “Shared Employees” strike the last sentence of the second paragraph and insert the following:

“If a shared employee’s primary duty station is not in Washington, D.C., then all employing authorities must agree in writing to the designation of the shared employee’s primary duty station to ensure they are aware of the potential cost to their official funds to cover travel expenses.”

- B. Strike subsections “Fellows,” “Unpaid Interns” and “Volunteers” and insert the following:

“STAFF NOT EMPLOYED BY THE HOUSE

Pursuant to House Rule XXIV, there is a prohibition on unofficial office accounts including “in-kind contribution of good or services for official purposes.” The Committee on Ethics recognizes exceptions to this general prohibition including allowing offices, on a temporary basis, to accept the in-kind services of fellows and unpaid interns.

Fellows

Per the House Ethics Manual “Fellows” perform services in a House office on a temporary basis as part of an established mid-career education program while continuing to receive the usual compensation from his or her sponsoring employer.

Offices are strongly encouraged to enter into a written agreement stipulating the terms of the fellow’s service.

Fellows do not count against the Member’s employee ceiling and are ineligible for benefits.

Fellows may use existing resources (i.e., computer equipment, supplies, etc.) but cannot be reimbursed from the MRA for any expenses incurred, including travel expenses. If a fellow incurs an expense as a result of work performed for the Member, the fellow may either be reimbursed by the fellow's sponsoring entity or a Member may use personal funds as authorized under House Rules.

The use of fellows is subject to regulations established by the Committee on Ethics. Contact the Committee on Ethics at x57103 for more information.

Unpaid Interns

Per the House Ethics Manual, "unpaid interns" perform services in a House office on a temporary basis as part of an educational plan. Each Member is responsible for determining the activities of unpaid interns consistent with these requirements.

Unpaid interns do not count against the Member's employee ceiling and are ineligible for benefits.

Unpaid interns may use existing resources (i.e., computer equipment, supplies, etc.) but cannot be reimbursed from the MRA for any expenses incurred, including travel expenses.

The use of unpaid interns is subject to House Ethics Manual regulations promulgated by the Committee on Ethics. Contact the Committee on Ethics at x57103 for more information."

- C. Under section "Pay" in the fourth paragraph strike "Student Loan Repayment" and replace with "Retention through Educational Advancement."

SECTION III. GENERAL OFFICE EXPENSES

- A. Strike subsection "Congressional Art Competition & App Challenge" and insert the following:

"AN ARTISTIC DISCOVERY: CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION

Offices must receive prior approval from the Committee on Ethics before soliciting on behalf of the Congressional Art Competition. Please see the see the User's Guide for additional information on the Congressional Art Competition.

The MRA may be used in a limited fashion to support the Congressional Art Competition. Permissible uses include:

1. The Frank provided the content of such communication is frankable.
2. Advertisements, Member official website and social media communications that are otherwise compliant with Handbook regulations and the Communications Standards Manual.
3. Use of letterhead and official seal of the House by the Member office provided such letterhead and seal are not used for solicitations.
4. Food and beverage expenses that are otherwise compliant with Handbook regulations.
5. Rental of rooms, chairs, and audio systems that are otherwise compliant with Handbook regulations.
6. Items for recognition of public service and acts of public distinction that are otherwise

compliant with Handbook regulations.

7. Mileage.
8. Expenses related to framing the winning artwork ONLY when a Member determines in his or her discretion that a hardship case is demonstrated.
9. Cost of shipping the winning artwork by means other than the Frank. A Member may not mail an entry under the Frank but can use the MRA to pay for postage.
10. Insurance expenses for the artwork are not reimbursable except for shipping insurance.

The MRA cannot be used to:

1. Hold an event that is primarily social in nature.
2. Purchase prizes.

Members may not use principal campaign funds to support the competition.”

- B. Strike subsection “Community Funding Projects” and replace with the following:

“COMMUNITY FUNDING PROJECTS

The MRA may be used to procure services of a professional individual or entity, such as a lawyer, accountant, or financial advisor, for the limited purpose of assisting a Member in determining, as part of a certification process that is required by federal law, House Rules or the rules of a committee, whether the Member has a “financial interest” in a community funding project the Member may wish to request or support.

This includes the requirement of House Rule 23, clause 17, that a written certification may be required with respect to a congressional earmark, limited tax benefit, or a limited tariff benefit sought by the Member in any bill or joint resolution (or an accompanying report), in any conference report on a bill or joint resolution (or accompanying joint statement of managers), or as may otherwise be required by federal law, House Rules, or the rules of a committee of the House.

When submitting required documentation to the Office of Financial Counseling, Member offices must also provide a copy of a written certification by the professional individual or entity that such individual or entity does not have a financial interest or other conflict of interest in any specific community funding project, congressional earmark, limited tax benefit, or limited tariff benefit which the reviewed for the Member.”

- C. Under section “Equipment” strike third paragraph and insert the following:

“Equipment for telework purposes should only be issued to paid employees or vendors who require remote access to the House network to perform their services.”

Second sentence of the fifth paragraph strike “lost, stolen” and replace with “missing.”

- D. Under section “Food and Beverage Expenses” strike the first sentence and replace with the following:

“Food and beverage expenses incidental to an official and representational meeting hosted by the Member office that includes one or more person(s) who are not a Member or employee of the House are reimbursable.”

- E. Strike subsection “Official Presentation of Items to Foreign Dignitaries” and replace with the following:

“OFFICIAL PRESENTATION OF ITEMS TO FOREIGN DIGNITARIES

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the purchase of items of nominal value for official presentation by Members when on official travel for the House, paid for with appropriated funds, outside the United States, its territories and possessions; or in connection with visits to the United States by foreign heads of State and other foreign officials are reimbursable. The MRA cannot be used to purchase items for foreign travel paid for by a foreign government or privately sponsored travel.

To purchase items from the House Gift Shop, select the item(s) and notify the salesclerk that it is for official presentation to a foreign dignitary. Receipts for such items should be vouchered and must be supported by a listing of the name, title or position, and country represented of all individuals to whom an official presentation was made.”

- F. After subsection “Official Presentation of Items to Foreign Dignitaries” insert the following new subsection “Officially Sanctioned Competitions”:

“OFFICIALLY-SANCTIONED COMPETITIONS

Officially-sanctioned competition means an academic or civic competition designed for participation by each Congressional office, in which entry is limited to the district constituents of each respective participating Congressional office; and that meets the requirements as detailed in the User’s Guide.

The MRA may be used in a limited fashion to support officially-sanctioned competitions. The following resources may be used in support of an officially-sanctioned competition:

1. The Frank, provided the content of such communication is frankable;
2. Advertisements that are otherwise compliant with Handbook and Commission content regulations;
3. Food and Beverage expenses that are otherwise compliant with Handbook regulations;
4. Rental of rooms, chairs, and audio systems that are otherwise compliant with Handbook regulations;
5. Gifts and donations that are otherwise compliant;
6. Staff time and the use of incidental resources;
7. Use of letterhead and official seal of the House by the Member office, provided such letterhead and seal are not used for solicitations;
8. Mileage; and
9. Member official web site and social media.”

- G. Under subsection “Parades” strike the paragraph “No official funds or resources may be used to participate in a parade.” and replace with the following:

“The MRA may only be used for ordinary and necessary expenses related to participation in parades in the Member’s district that are in support of the Member’s official and representational duties and are hosted and organized by a state or local government.

Ordinary and necessary expenses include mileage reimbursement to and from the parade location and printing and production costs for informational materials to distribute at the parade. Any materials handed out must comply with the Communications Standards Manual regulations. Offices are encouraged to reach out to the Communications Standard Commission for guidance on whether an Advisory Opinion is required.

The MRA may not be used to purchase items for distribution including but not limited to magnets, keychains, stickers, notepads, buttons, pens, or pencils.

Members may not use official funds or resources, including staff time, to participate in any parade hosted by a non-governmental entity or where political campaigning or signage is allowed.

- H. Under subsection “Vendor” insert after the first paragraph, the following new paragraph:

“Members may not contract with an individual or firm substantially owned or controlled by an individual who works for the House, in a paid or unpaid capacity, for the acquisition of goods or services.”

SECTION IV: DISTRICT EXPENSES

- A. Under subsection “Official Meetings and Events” insert after the first bullet point in paragraph one the following:

“parking only when included as part of facility rental contract;”

- B. Under subsection “Officially Leased Vehicles” strike the second paragraph, “Monthly payments may be made in advance.”

SECTION V: TRAVEL

- A. Under subsection “Modes of Transportation,” heading “Private or Corporate Aircraft,” strike the first paragraph and replace with the following:

“Members may use their own privately owned aircraft for official business and may be reimbursed on a per mile basis and not for fuel purchased or any other expense. The rate per mile is set annually by the [General Services Administration](#).”

- B. Under subsection “Modes of Transportation,” heading “Privately-Owned or Privately-Leased Vehicles” strike the first and second paragraph and replace with the following:

“A Member or employee who uses his or her privately-owned or privately-leased vehicle while on official and representational business, may be reimbursed on a per mile basis and not for fuel purchased or any other expense. The rate per mile is set annually by the [General Services Administration](#). Each Member may establish a lower reimbursement rate for themselves and his or her employees.

Employees are eligible for mileage reimbursement when driving the Member in the employee’s privately owned vehicle between the Member’s residence and the office.”