

# COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

116<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS

## A RESOLUTION

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION 116-16

**Resolution to Amend the *Members' Congressional Handbook*  
and the *Committees' Congressional Handbook***

*Be it resolved*, that the Committee adopt the following regulations amending and superseding the relevant portions of the prior regulations known collectively as the *Members' Congressional Handbook* and the *Committees' Congressional Handbook*, respectively:

In the *Members' Congressional Handbook*:

1. The Introduction: Members' Representational Allowance section is amended by inserting, after the paragraph beginning with "Questions about reimbursement" and ending with "prior to incurring the expense." a new paragraph reading "For questions related to official office communications content, contact the Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards ("Commission") by calling x59337 (Majority) or x60647 (Minority), visiting <https://cha.house.gov/communications-guidelines> or [clicking here](#)."

2. The Office Expenses section is amended as follows:

The An Artistic Discovery, The Congressional Art Competition subsection is amended by striking the first sentence of the second paragraph;

The Certificates subsection is amended by striking all after the first paragraph and inserting "Certificates must comply with Commission content regulations.";

The Greetings subsection is amended by striking all that follows the subsection title and inserting:

"Expenses related to the purchase or distribution of greetings are reimbursable, provided the greeting complies with Commission content regulations.";

The Mailing Lists subsection is amended by striking the subsection title and inserting "Distribution Lists", by striking "mailing and" from the first, second and third paragraphs, and by striking the last sentence of the fourth

paragraph and inserting “For further guidance, please refer to Commission content regulations, which can be found by calling x59337 (Majority) or x60647 (Minority), visiting <https://cha.house.gov/communications-guidelines> or [clicking here](#).”;

The Officially-sanctioned Competitions subsection is amended by striking “Franking regulations” and inserting “Commission content regulations” in item 2 under the Use of Official Resources to Support an Officially-sanctioned Competition heading;

The Audio and Video Expenses subsection is amended by striking “Franking standards if sent out as an unsolicited Mass Communication” and inserting “Commission content regulations if sent out as an unsolicited mass communication” in the final paragraph;

The Printing and Production subsection is amended by striking the last paragraph of the subsection and inserting “Printed materials only require an Advisory Opinion when they are distributed as an unsolicited mass communication. Items not distributed as a mass communication do not require an Advisory Opinion but must still meet Commission content standards.”;

The Stationery subsection is amended, under the Use heading, by striking “the Franking Regulations” and inserting “Commission content regulations” in the second sentence and by striking the last sentence of the first paragraph and inserting “For questions related to official communications content, contact the Commission by calling x59337 (Majority) or x60647 (Minority), visiting <https://cha.house.gov/communications-guidelines> or [clicking here](#).” in the first paragraph;

The Stationery subsection is further amended, under the Business Cards subsection, by striking the second sentence of the first paragraph;

The District Office subsection is amended under the Signs heading by striking “the Franking Regulations” and inserting “Commission content regulations”.

3. The Communications section is amended as follows:

Immediately under the section title insert a new subsection to read:

“Official Communications Generally

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to an official communication that complies with Commission content regulations are reimbursable.

For questions about content standards, contact the Commission at x59337 (Majority) or x60647 (Minority).

For questions about the authorization of expenses, contact the Committee on House Administration at x52061 (Majority) or x58281 (Minority).”;

The Physical Town Hall Meetings subsection is amended by striking item 9 and inserting “9. Banners/leaflets/flyers that Comply with Commission content regulations.”;

The Joint Physical Town Hall Meetings subsection is amended by striking the last paragraph and inserting a new paragraph “Members are prohibited from directing any unsolicited mass communications outside of the district from which elected. Therefore, official expenses that relate to promoting joint town hall meetings must be separately accounted for and charged to the MRA of the Member into whose district the mass communication was delivered.”;

The Joint Virtual Town Hall Meetings subsection is amended by striking item 2 and inserting “2. Members are prohibited from directing any unsolicited mass communications outside of the district from which elected. Therefore, official expenses that relate to advertising joint virtual town hall meetings must be separately accounted for and charged to the MRA of the Member into whose district the mass communication was delivered.”;

The Advertisements subsection is amended to read as follows:

“Ordinary and necessary expenses related to advertisements are reimbursable. Advertisements must comply with all applicable Federal laws and House rules, including Commission content and disclosure requirements. The Communications Standards Manual is available by calling x59337 (Majority) or x60647 (Minority), visiting <https://cha.house.gov/communications-guidelines> or [clicking here](#).

For example, Members must disclose, within a television and radio advertisement, the source of payment for the official advertisement. Members may use any of the following:

1. “Paid for with official funds from the office of [Member’s name].”
2. “Paid for by the funds authorized by the House of Representatives for the [district number] District of [name of state].”
3. “Paid for by official funds authorized by the House of Representatives.””

Certain advertisements may require an Advisory Opinion from the Commission. For details, please consult the Commission.

The Electronic Communications subsection is amended to read as follows:

“Ordinary and necessary expenses related to electronic communications are reimbursable.

- All official electronic communication content, which is sent out as an unsolicited mass communication, must comply with Commission content regulations.
- All official electronic communications must comply with House information technology and security policies as approved by the Committee on House Administration.
- All official electronic communications sent to an email list of 100 or more individuals must include a usable opt-out in the body of the email that enables an individual to optout from the Member’s email list. Opt-out requests must be honored. These mailings much comply with House IT Policy 007.0 – Bulk Email List Management as approved by the Committee.
- All unsolicited mass communications must be reported on the Quarterly Mass Communications Report.”;

The Newspaper Inserts subsection is amended by striking “the Franking Regulations” and inserting “Commission content regulations” in the first paragraph and by striking the second paragraph;

The Unsolicited Mass Communications Restrictions subsection is amended by striking “Restrictions” from the subsection title and by striking all that follows the subsection title and inserting:

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to unsolicited mass communications are reimbursable. Unsolicited mass communications are subject to regulations promulgated by the Commission, including Commission blackout dates, which can be found by calling x59337 (Majority) or x60647 (Minority), visiting <https://cha.house.gov/communications-guidelines> or [clicking here](#).

Examples of unsolicited mass communications are:

1. Postal mail
2. Electronic mail

3. Handouts
4. Text messages (and similar electronic messaging methods)
5. Advertisements (including digital, newspaper, radio, and television)
6. Robocalls
7. Other paper-based, telecommunications-based, and digital communications

The following are not considered unsolicited mass communications and, therefore, are not restricted during blackout periods, but must still comply with the Commission content standards:

1. Direct responses to communications, including casework and other solicited communications
2. Communications to Members of Congress and other government officials
3. News releases, press releases, interviews (initiated by an outside entity), or media releases (written or recorded communications from Members, directed at the news media), in any format. Note that expenses for production and transmittal are reimbursable; expenses for satellite downlink and broadcast are not reimbursable.
4. Websites (including a Member's official website)
5. Member's participation in a media hosted interview or program
6. Previously recorded programs and public service announcements aired at the discretion of a media outlet, when no expenses are incurred by the Member
7. Purchases of research materials, including videotapes, audiotapes, and other electronic media
8. Video conferencing services
9. Mass communications distributed to a subscribed list

The Websites subsection is amended by amending item 4 to read "4. Committee Websites may not be hosted on Websites paid for by the MRA."

The Websites subsection is further amended by amending the Content heading to read:

## **“Content**

The content of a Member’s official website and official social media is governed by the Communications Standards Manual. A copy of the Communications Standards Manual is available by calling x59337 (Majority) or x60647 (Minority), visiting <https://cha.house.gov/communications-guidelines> or [clicking here](#).”

4. The Congressional Member Organizations section is amended by striking “the Franking Regulations” and inserting “Commission content standards” in the Communications heading of the Congressional Member Organizations subsection.
5. The Table of Contents is amended to reflect these amendments.

In the *Committees’ Congressional Handbook*:

1. The Communications section is amended as follows:

Immediately under the section title insert a new subsection to read:

“Official Communications Generally

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to an official communication that complies with Commission content regulations are reimbursable.

For questions about content standards, contact the Commission at x59337 (Majority) or x60647 (Minority).

For questions about the authorization of expenses, contact the Committee on House Administration at x52061 (Majority) or x58281 (Minority).”;

The Advertisements subsection is amended to read as follows:

“**General**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to advertisements are reimbursable. Advertisements must comply with all applicable Federal laws and House rules, including Commission content and disclosure requirements. The Communications Standards Manual is available by calling x59337 (Majority) or x60647 (Minority), visiting <https://cha.house.gov/communications-guidelines> or [clicking here](#).

For example, Committees must disclose, within a television and radio advertisement, the source of payment for the official advertisement. Committees may use any of the following:

- a. "Paid for with official funds from the Committee on [committee name]."

b. "Paid for by funds authorized by the House of Representatives for the Committee on [committee name]."

c. "Paid for by official funds authorized by the House of Representatives."

Certain advertisements may require an Advisory Opinion from the Commission. For details, please consult the Commission.

### **Electronic Communications**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the distribution of electronic communications are reimbursable.

All official electronic communication content, which is sent out as an unsolicited mass communication, must comply with Commission content regulations.

All official electronic communications must comply with House information technology and security policies as approved by the Committee on House Administration.

All official electronic communications sent to an email list of 100 or more individuals must include a usable opt-out in the body of the email that enables an individual to optout from the Member's email list. Opt-out requests must be honored. These mailings must comply with House IT Policy 007.0 – Bulk Email List Management as approved by the Committee.

The Chairperson or other Member of the Committee authorized to use electronic communications may not distribute an unsolicited communication that is sent to 500 or more recipients into any congressional district fewer than 90 days before an election where the Member representing that district is subject to the pre-election prohibition on mass mailings pursuant to 39 U.S.C. § 3210(a)(6)(A), except that this restriction does not apply to:

- a. Direct responses to inquiries or requests from the persons to whom the matter is mailed.
- b. Communications to colleagues in Congress or to government officials (whether Federal, state, or local).
- c. News releases to the communications media.
- d. Mass communications to a subscribed list of recipients.

e. Mass communications related to officially-sanctioned Competitions, Military Academy nominations, official House office employment listings (including listings for the Wounded Warrior Program and Gold Star Family Fellowship Program), and information in the event of a disaster or other threat to life safety.”

The Franked Mail subsection is amended to read as follows:

**“Use of the Frank**

1. Pursuant to 39 U.S.C. § 3210, committees are entitled to the privilege of sending mail as Franked mail in order to assist and expedite the conduct of official Committee business. The content of Committee mail must relate to the normal business of the Committee. For information regarding the use of the Frank, refer to the Commission Manual.

2. At the request of the Committee Chair, a separate mail accounting system can be provided to the minority of the Committee.

3. The Chairperson or other Member of the Committee authorized to use franked mail may not distribute a mass mailing into any congressional district fewer than 90 days before an election where the Member representing that district is subject to the pre-election prohibition on mass mailings pursuant to 39 U.S.C. § 3210(a)(6)(A), except that this restriction does not apply to:

a. Direct responses to inquiries or requests from the persons to whom the matter is mailed.

b. Communications to colleagues in Congress or to government officials (whether Federal, state, or local).

c. News releases to the communications media.

4. Mail to be delivered outside the United States, its territories and possessions (other than mail matter bearing an APO or FPO address for delivery through the United States military mail system) is not eligible for distribution under the Frank and may be sent with stamps. In applicable circumstances, the Committee may also use the following:



- a. For official mail to U.S. Embassies and missions abroad, the Department of State provides diplomatic pouch service. For information regarding this service, contact House Postal Operations at x63764.
- b. Committee hearings, reports, and prints which are not available for purchase from the Government Publishing Office, and which are to be sent to foreign countries, may be sent to the Library of Congress for forwarding through the Exchange and Gifts Division. For further information regarding this program, contact the Library of Congress, Exchange and Gifts Division at x75243.

Content standards for franked mail shall be established by the Commission and set forth in the Communications Standards Manual. A copy of the Communications Standards Manual is available by calling x59337 (Majority) or x60647 (Minority), visiting <https://cha.house.gov/communications-guidelines> or [clicking here](#).

### **Franked Mail Monthly Statement**

Each month the United States Postal Service (USPS) will prepare an USPS Franked Mail Monthly Statement listing the postage expenses of all Franked mail incurred in that month. The USPS will forward this statement directly to Postal Operations for payment from the Committee's franked mail allocation and will provide an informational copy to Committees."

The Stationery subsection is amended by striking, from the second to last paragraph, "the Franking Regulations. Contact the Franking Commission at x60647" and inserting "Commission regulations. Contact the Commission by calling x59337 (Majority) or x60647 (Minority), visiting <https://cha.house.gov/communications-guidelines> or [clicking here](#) for information on content of official correspondence." and by striking the last sentence in the last paragraph.

The Business Cards subsection is amended by striking the second sentence.

The Websites subsection is amended by striking item 8 and renumbering item 9 as item 8 and item 10 as item 9 and by amending the Content heading to read as follows:

## **“Content**

The content of an official Committee website and official Committee social media must comply with the rules established by the Commission and set forth in the Communications Standards Manual. A copy of the Communications Standards Manual is available by calling x59337 (Majority) or x60647 (Minority), visiting <https://cha.house.gov/communications-guidelines> or [clicking here](#).

2. The Table of Contents is amended to reflect these amendments.

Adopted February 12, 2020