

Senate Issues Travel Guidance

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On November 13, 2007, the Senate Select Committee on Ethics issued guidance for the participation of Senators and staffers in privately-sponsored travel. This guidance was mandated by the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act (HLOGA) and is parallel to the guidance issued by the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct earlier last year. (www.wileyrein.com/docs/publications/13173.pdf)

The Senate Committee has posted all of its travel-related documents at www.ethics.senate.gov. There, one will find the Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form, the Privately-Sponsored Travel Checklist, the Regulations and Guidelines for Privately-Sponsored Travel, and the Glossary for the Regulations and Guidelines. Moreover, there are additional internal Senate travel forms posted on the site.

Under the rules changes that were part of HLOGA, entities that employ or retain lobbyists are limited to providing Senators and staffers with one-night/one day of travel in connection with their official duties. Moreover, individual lobbyists may not plan or organize privately funded travel except in a *de minimus* amount. In the Regulations and Guidelines for Privately-Sponsored Travel, the Committee underscores the fact that "a lobbyist is not allowed to solicit or initiate communications with a trip sponsor, have control over which Senate employees are invited on a trip, extend or forward an invitation to a participant, determine the trip itinerary, or be mentioned in the invitation." An individual lobbyist simply may respond to a trip sponsor's "request to identify Senate invitees with interest in a particular issue relevant to a planned trip."

The Regulations and Guidelines discuss all aspects of privately sponsored travel in great detail. Most important for the private sector,

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Senators and staff must submit a completed travel package to the Committee no later than 30 days prior to the departure dates of a proposed trip; therefore, any organization planning such travel must organize their materials well in advance.