

Lobbying Disclosure and Political Contribution Rules

In recent years, the lobbying practices of organizations and individuals have come under heightened scrutiny, resulting in the passage of strict Congressional ethics rules and lobbying disclosure requirements. The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (the LDA), as amended by The Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007 (HLOGA), imposes registration and reporting requirements on organizations that employ or hire lobbyists and individual lobbyists. Compliance mistakes can trigger both financial and criminal penalties. Groom attorneys help clients navigate the lobbying registration and disclosure requirements under the LDA and HLOGA to determine whether activities of the organization meet the threshold requirements for registration and quarterly reporting. In addition, we closely monitor key changes made to the registration and reporting rules and keep clients informed of the implications of these changes.

Under provisions enacted as part of the HLOGA, organizations employing or hiring lobbyists and individual lobbyists are now required to file separate reports on a semiannual basis identifying, among other things, contributions of \$200 or more to candidates, campaign committees and other organizations linked to members of Congress, including political action committees, charities, or entities named for a member. Organizations must also certify on these reports that no one in the organization has violated the congressional gift rules. In order to file the new contribution reports, organizations and individual lobbyists must keep track of various kinds of political contributions made within a particular filing period. Groom attorneys help clients identify contributions that must be reported and assist with the preparation and filing of semiannual contribution reports.

Additional examples of our relevant experience with the lobbying disclosure and related rules include:

- Preparing overviews for clients on key lobbying registration and disclosure rules under the LDA and HLOGA.

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- Assisting clients with determining whether the lobbying contact, lobbying activity and monetary threshold requirements for registration and reporting under the LDA and HLOGA have been met, and preparing and filing LD-1 registration statements with the Secretary of the Senate and Clerk of the House.
- Assisting clients with the preparation of quarterly LD-2 disclosure reports and semiannual LD-203 contribution reports.
- Assisting clients with the disclosure and reporting rules under the LDA and HLOGA applicable to coalitions and associations.
- Assisting clients with the federal reporting (*i.e.*, Form 990) and notice requirements applicable to tax-exempt organizations that incur nondeductible lobbying expenses.