New House and Senate Gift Rules

Guidelines for AAMC’s Project Medical Education

Project Medical Education
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I. Overview  

On September 14, 2007, the President signed into law the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007. Among other ethics reforms, the Act amends Senate Rules governing gifts to Senators and their staff. These amendments largely, though not perfectly, parallel changes the House of Representatives made to its own gift rules earlier this year. Although the legislation makes only modest changes to the substantive rules previously in effect, for example leaving in place the numerous exceptions to the congressional gift rules, it dramatically increases the civil and criminal exposure of lobbyists and their employers. Most importantly, for the first time ever, lobbyists and their employers will be liable for violations of the congressional gift rules. Until now, those rules have been nothing more than internal disciplinary rules of the House and Senate.  

In light of these new rules, questions have arisen regarding the AAMC’s Project Medical Education (“PME”). We understand that PMEs are typically held at one of five kinds of institutions: (1) colleges of medicine in a private, non-profit university; (2) colleges of medicine in a public university; (3) publicly-owned teaching hospitals; (4) privately-owned non-profit teaching hospitals; and (5) privately-owned for-profit teaching hospitals. This guidance memorandum addresses, in question and answer format, questions likely to arise when each of these entities pays the costs associated with a Member or staffer’s attendance at these events. The permissibility of paid travel and other aspects of a particular PME will depend on the facts and circumstances of the PME. This memorandum is intended to provide general guidelines but individual PMEs should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, in light of the relevant ethics guidance from Congress.  

II. Frequently Asked Questions  

1. May a private, non-profit school of medicine pay for the following for members of Congress and their staff in connection with PME programs?  

a. Long-Distance Transportation  

Yes, provided the travel has been pre-approved by the Senate Select Committee on Ethics or the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct. For Senators and Senate staff, the trip must not

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1 “Teaching hospitals,” as used herein, refer to hospitals that are affiliated with a university but which are separate, and legally distinct, from the university. Hospitals that partner with a university to offer residency programs (including hospitals that share faculty, chiefs of service, and department chairs with universities) but which are not themselves part of the university fall under this category.  

2 This guidance memorandum focuses exclusively on the party reimbursing the Member or staffer for costs associated with the event. If a PME is hosted by a teaching hospital, but the Member or staffer receives reimbursement from a medical school that is affiliated with the hospital, then the section of this guidance memorandum addressing schools of medicine should be consulted, not the section on teaching hospitals. Of course, if the medical school was itself reimbursed by the teaching hospital, then the rules applicable to teaching hospitals would apply.  

3 Because the vast majority of United States universities are non-profit, we assume no PME programs are offered at private for-profit universities.
have been planned, organized, or arranged by or at the request of a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal. Moreover, no registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal may accompany the Senator or Senate employee at any point throughout the trip.

The House gift rules provide that an “institution of higher education” may reimburse a House or Senate member or staffer (or pay directly) for “necessary transportation” costs associated with attendance at “a meeting, speaking engagement, fact-finding trip, or similar event in connection with [the member or staffer’s] official duties.” House R. XXV(5)(b)(1)(C). The newly amended Senate Rules use similar language, but open the exception to all 501(c)(3) organizations, not just universities. S. 1 § 544(a). Because the PME programs are designed to “help[] educate Congress and other policymakers about the process of medical education, the benefits it provides, its complex funding mechanisms, and the essential role of government in providing financial support,” these programs are likely to be deemed “meeting[s], fact-finding trip[s], or similar event[s] in connection with [the member or staffer’s] official duties.” Id. Therefore, the university may pay for the member or staffer’s reasonable transportation costs. See Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Memorandum, “Travel Guidelines and Regulations,” Feb. 20, 2007 (allowing for reimbursement for up to business-class transportation on commercial air carriers).

To take advantage of this exception, the House and Senate Rules provide that the member or staffer must, before traveling, “obtain the prior approval” of the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct or the Senate Select Committee on Ethics. House R. XXV(5)(d)(2); S.1 § 544(a). This approval requires a written certification from an officer of the organization paying for the travel stating, among other things, that “the trip will not be financed in any part by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal.” House R. XXV(5)(d)(1)(A); S.1 § 544(a).

The Senate Rules add a further wrinkle. Pursuant to those rules, reimbursement is not permissible if the trip was “planned, organized, or arranged by or at the request of a registered lobbyist, or agent of a foreign principal.” S.1 § 544(a)(7). Furthermore, no registered lobbyist may accompany the Senator or Senate employee “at any point throughout the trip.” Id. Thus, no registered lobbyist would be allowed to travel with the Senator or staffer or attend events with the Senator or staffer. The House Rules include similar restrictions but, importantly, exempt institutions of higher education. House R. XXV(5)(c)(1)(B); (5)(c)(2).

b. Local Transportation

See analysis for long-distance travel offered by private medical schools. In addition, if the exceptions relevant to long-distance travel do not apply, payment of local transportation costs may be permissible if the PME qualifies as a “widely-attended event.”

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4 Accredited medical schools count as institutions of higher learning. Under the Higher Education Act, an “institution of higher education” is an education institution in any State that (1) “admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;” (2) “is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;” (3) is a “school that provides not less than a 1-year program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation;” (4) “is a public or other nonprofit institution,” and (5) “is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association” or “has been granted pre-accreditation.” 20 U.S.C. § 1001; see House R. XXV(b)(1)(C)(3) (noting that the definition for “institution of higher education,” as used in the Rules, is found in the Higher Education Act).

5 http://www.aamc.org/members/pme/.
As discussed above, the House and Senate gift rules allow the provision of “necessary transportation” to members of Congress and their staff in certain situations. Because “necessary transportation” includes both airfare and local transportation, the analysis above related to long-distance travel offered by private medical schools would also apply to the provision of local transportation by these same schools.

In addition, the gift rules permit a Member or staffer to “accept an offer of free attendance” at certain “widely-attended events.” House R. XXV(5)(a)(4)(A); see also Senate R. XXXV(1)(d)(1). “Free attendance” includes “the provision of local transportation.” House R. XXV(5)(a)(4)(D); see also Senate R. XXXV(d)(4). To take advantage of this exception, three elements must be present. First, there must be a “reasonable expectation that at least 25 persons, other than Members, officers or employees of Congress, will attend the event.” Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives on Gifts and Travel, 106th Congress, 2nd Session (April 2000); Senate Ethics Manual, 108th Congress, 1st Session (2003). “Individuals who are officials of other branches or levels of government count toward the required minimum of twenty-five.” Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives on Gifts and Travel, 106th Congress, 2nd Session (April 2000). Second, “attendance at the event [must be] open to individuals from throughout a given industry or profession, or those in attendance [must] represent a range of persons interested in a given matter.” Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives on Gifts and Travel, 106th Congress, 2nd Session (April 2000); Senate Ethics Manual, 108th Congress, 1st Session (2003). Third, “attendance at the event [must be] appropriate to the performance of the official duties” of the Member or staffer. House R. XXV(5)(a)(4)(A); see also Senate R. XXXV(1)(d)(1). A number of factors are relevant to determining whether “attendance at the event is appropriate to the performance of the official duties” of the Member or staffer. These include “the opportunity to meet with constituents at the event, the desirability of representing one’s constituency at an event where other elected or appointed officials will be present, or the opportunity to present or receive information that is pertinent to one’s district or to a legislative proposal.” Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives on Gifts and Travel, 106th Congress, 2nd Session (April 2000). The nature of a staff member’s duties in the office is also a relevant factor. Id.

In this case, it appears at least some PMEs might qualify as widely-attended events, depending on the nature of the event and those expected to attend. Whether the first element is met -- a reasonable expectation that at least 25 persons, other than Members of Congress will attend the event -- will depend on the individual PME. The second element -- that the invitees represent individuals throughout a given industry or profession -- is probably met here. It seems likely that the many invited state and local legislators and executive officials would be deemed “individuals throughout a given industry or profession” or a “range of persons interested in a given matter,” given that they represent a broad cross-section of those in law-making professions. Although it is somewhat unusual for the invitees to come from the same profession -- law-making -- as the Members of Congress themselves, nothing in the House or Senate gift rule guidance suggests that the element would not be met in these circumstances. Finally, the third element would appear to be met. Because these events provide Members and staffers with the “opportunity to present or receive information that is pertinent to [their] district or to a legislative proposal” -- information needed to make decisions regarding funding of medical schools --

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6 While the point is not directly addressed in published ethics committee guidance, it is likely that the sponsoring institution’s own representatives would count toward the 25-person threshold. Because the attendees must represent a range of interests, however, the greater the proportion of attendees from the sponsor, the greater the risk the event would not be deemed to be widely attended.
these events are probably “appropriate to the performance of the official duties” of the Member or staffer.

c. Meals

See analysis for long-distance travel offered by private medical schools. Meal costs must be “reasonable” and must not be provided over a period exceeding four days for House Members and staffers and three days for Senators and staffers. In addition, if the exceptions relevant to long-distance travel do not apply, payment of local transportation costs may be permissible if the PME qualifies as a “widely-attended event,” as analyzed in section 1(b).

As discussed above, the House and Senate gift rules allow the provision of “necessary transportation” to members of Congress and their staff in certain situations. Because “necessary transportation” includes “food and refreshments,” House R. XXV(5)(b)(4); Senate R. XXXV(d)(4), the analysis above related to long-distance travel offered by private medical schools would also apply to the provision of food and refreshments by these same schools. It is important to note, however, that meal costs must be “reasonable” and must not be provided over a period exceeding four days with respect to House Members and staff, House R. XXV(5)(b)(4), or three days with respect to Senators and staff, Senate R. XXXV(d)(4). The House Gift and Travel Regulations issued this year help define “reasonable” meal expenses. “For travel to events arranged or organized without regard to congressional participation (for example, annual meetings of business or trade associations or other membership organizations), Members, officers, and employees may accept meals related to the event that are similar to those provided to or purchased by other event attendees.” United States House of Representatives, Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, “Travel Guidelines and Regulations,” Feb. 20, 2007. “For privately-sponsored travel to events arranged or organized specifically with regard to congressional participation (for example, fact-finding trips, site visits, educational conferences and other trips designed for congressional attendance), Members, officers, and employees may accept reasonable meal expenses at an appropriate facility. The factors to be considered in judging reasonableness of a meal expense include the maximum per diem rates for meals for official Government travel published by the General Services Administration.” Id. In this case, even though state and local lawmakers are invited, PMEs will probably be deemed events organized specifically with regard to congressional participation and, as a result, this latter standard will apply.

In addition to the exception for meal costs associated with “necessary transportation” to certain events, the gift rules permit a Member or staffer to “accept an offer of free attendance at a widely attended convention, conference, symposium, forum, panel discussion, dinner, viewing, reception, or similar event, if . . . attendance at the event is appropriate to the performance of the official duties” of the Member or staffer. House R. XXV(5)(a)(4)(A); see also Senate R. XXXV(1)(d)(1). “Free attendance” includes “the provision of food [and] refreshments.” House R. XXV(5)(a)(4)(D); see also Senate R. XXXV(d)(4). For an analysis of the “widely-attended event” exception, see the discussion above in the local transportation section.

7 Domestic per diem meal rates at particular destinations can be found at http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentId=17943&contentType=GSA_BASIC.
d. Lodging

See analysis for long-distance travel offered by university hospitals. Lodging costs must be “reasonable” and may not exceed four days for House Members and staff and three days for Senators and staff.

As discussed above, the House and Senate gift rules allow the provision of “necessary transportation” to members of Congress and their staff in certain situations. Because “necessary transportation” includes “lodging,” House R. XXV(5)(b)(4); Senate R. XXXV(d)(4), the analysis above related to long-distance travel offered by private medical schools would also apply to the provision of lodging by these same schools. It is important to note, however, that lodging must be “reasonable” and must not be provided over a period exceeding four days with respect to House Members and staff, House R. XXV(5)(b)(4), or three days with respect to Senators and staff, Senate R. XXXV(d)(4).

“Among the factors to be considered in judging the reasonableness of expenses for a lodging facility are the cost of the facility, the location of the facility and its proximity to the site(s) being visited, the quality of the conference facilities, any security concerns, and whether the facility may accommodate the number of attendees at the event.” United States House of Representatives, Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, “Travel Guidelines and Regulations,” Feb. 20, 2007.


e. Incidental Gifts (e.g., scrubs, white coats, inscribed USB sticks)

No, unless the gifts qualify as “commemorative items” or “items of nominal value.”

The House and Senate gift rules generally prohibit Members and staffers from accepting gifts. Two exceptions might apply to the provision of gifts such as scrubs, white coats, or USB sticks with host institution logos. First, the gift restrictions do not apply to “an item of nominal value such as a greeting card, baseball cap, or a T-shirt.” House R. XXV(5)(a)(3)(W); see also Senate R. XXXV(1)(c)(23) (referring to “items of little intrinsic worth”). In the House, an item is generally of nominal value if its value does not exceed $10. Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives on Gifts and Travel, 106th Congress, 2nd Session (April 2000). The Senate guidance does not give a dollar value but instructs individuals to use “reasonable discretion” and give “due regard to the kind of items enumerated in the exception.” Senate Ethics Manual, 108th Congress, 1st Session (2003). In this case, it seems likely that the white coats and USB sticks would exceed $10 and would probably not be considered items of “little intrinsic worth.” Consequently, the “items of nominal value” exception would probably not apply to these gifts. The scrubs, however, might fall below the $10 threshold and, if so, would probably be considered items of nominal value by both the House and Senate.

The second exception that might apply to these items is the exception for items that are (1) “substantially commemorative in nature” and (2) “intended for presentation.” House R. XXV(5)(a)(3)(S); Senate R. XXXV(1)(c)(20). The House guidance on “commemorative items” notes that an “in-person presentation of the item to the Member or staff person” is required in order for the second element to be met. Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives on Gifts and Travel, 106th Congress, 2nd Session (April 2000). Thus, the presentation of a white coat at a “white coat ceremony” in which participants are presented with the coat to symbolize their rite of passage into medical school would probably satisfy this second element. It is less clear, however, whether items such as white coats, scrubs, or USB sticks would be deemed “substantially commemorative in nature.” To meet this element the item must generally carry some sort of inscription -- for example, “the Member’s name, the name of
the presenting organization, and the date of the presentation” -- and must not have “significant utilitarian or artistic value.” *Id.* In this case, it is not clear whether these items will carry this inscription. Furthermore, scrubs, coats, and USB sticks all have some utilitarian value and it remains an open question as to whether the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct or the Senate Select Committee on Ethics would find this value “significant.”

2. **May a public school of medicine pay for transportation, meals, lodging, and gifts associated with PME programs?**

   Yes. *A public school of medicine may pay for travel, meals, lodging, and incidental gifts associated with a PME program without obtaining prior approval from any Congressional committees.*

   Both the House and Senate gift rules allow members and staffers to receive “anything that is paid for by the Federal Government [or] by a State or local government.” House R. XXV(5)(a)(3)(O); Sen. R. XXXV(1)(c)(16). According to the Senate Ethics Manual, “state-run colleges and universities are treated as part of state government.” Similarly, an example in the House Gift and Travel Booklet notes that gifts from state universities are permissible. United States House of Representatives, Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, “Gifts and Travel Booklet,” April 2000.

3. **May a public teaching hospital pay for transportation, meals, lodging, and gifts associated with PME programs?**

   Yes. *As is the case with public schools of medicine, public teaching hospitals may pay for travel, meals, lodging, and incidental gifts associated with a PME program without obtaining prior approval from any Congressional committees.*

4. **May a private, non-profit teaching hospital pay for the following for members of Congress and their staff in connection with PME programs?**

   a. **Long-Distance Transportation**

   The *House and Senate gift rules applicable to PMEs offered by private, non-profit teaching hospitals differ, but each would allow reimbursement for long-distance travel costs if certain conditions are met.*

   The House rules would permit a private, non-profit teaching hospital to pay for long-distance transportation for Members and staff in two situations. First, such payments are permitted if the hospital does not employ or retain registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.8 Second, such payments are permitted if (1) the PME is restructured as a “one-day event,” (2) the House Member or staffer is not accompanied on any segment2 by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal, and (3) no

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8 For this exception to apply, congressional employees who attend the PMEs must report their reimbursed expenses or expenses that will be reimbursed to the Clerk of the House of Representatives within 15 days of the trip. Staff members must also obtain the advance approval of their Members. House R. XXV(5)(b)(1)(A).

9 The prohibition on lobbyist accompaniment on “any segment” of a trip, as used in both the House and Senate gift rules, means that a lobbyist cannot travel with any Member or staffer on any leg of the trip, but can be present at the event itself (i.e., the class, reception, lunch, etc.). In contrast, the prohibitions discussed below on lobbyist accompaniment “at any point” on the trip prohibit the lobbyist from traveling with the Member or staffer and accompanying the Member or staffer at the event (i.e., the class, reception, lunch, etc.) itself.
registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal had anything more than a de minimis role in the planning, organization, request, or arrangement of the trip. Note the important distinction between the second and third elements. The second -- which refers to lobbyist accompaniment -- involves the physical location of the lobbyist. The third -- which refers to lobbyist involvement -- relates to the work the lobbyist has performed in preparing for the trip, not his or her physical location.

The Senate rules would permit such payment in three situations. First, such payments are permitted if the hospital does not employ or retain lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal. Second, such payments are permitted if (1) no-registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal had anything more than a de minimis role in the planning, organization, request, or arrangement of the trip and (2) the Senator or staffer is not accompanied by a registered lobbyist at any point throughout the trip (even at the event itself). Finally, such payments are permitted if (1) the PME is restructured as a one-day event, (2) no-registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal had anything more than a de minimis role in the planning, organization, request, or arrangement of the trip, and (3) the Senator or staffer is not accompanied by a registered lobbyist on any segment of the trip.

Pre-approval from the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct or the Senate Select Committee on Ethics is required regardless of which alternative applies. House R. XXV(5)(d); S.1 § 544(a)(7). A more detailed review of these alternatives in the House and the Senate follows below.

i. House

As mentioned above, the House rules would permit a non-profit teaching hospital to pay for long-distance transportation for Members and staff in two situations.

1. First Situation

The House gift rules provide that an organization may reimburse a House member or staffer (or pay directly) for “necessary transportation” costs associated with attendance at “a meeting, speaking engagement, fact-finding trip, or similar event in connection with [the member or staffer’s] official duties” if the organization does not “retain[] or employ[] registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.” House R. XXV(5)(b)(1)(C). Because the PME programs are designed to “help[] educate Congress and other policymakers about the process of medical education, the benefits it provides, its complex funding mechanisms, and the essential role of government in providing financial support,” these programs are likely to be deemed “meeting[s], fact-finding trip[s], or similar event[s] in connection with [the member or staffer’s] official duties.” Id. Therefore, a non-profit teaching hospital

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10 For this exception to apply, congressional employees who attend the PMEs must report their reimbursed expenses or expenses that will be reimbursed to the Secretary of the Senate within 30 days of the trip. Staff members must also obtain the advance approval of their Members. S.1 § 544(a)(5).

11 The exception in House Rule XXV(5)(b)(1)(C)(i) for reimbursement from “institutions of higher education” would not apply to a private teaching hospital, as defined in this memo. See supra n.1. As noted above, supra note 2, to be an “institution of higher education,” the hospital would have to be “accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association” or have “been granted pre-accreditation.” 20 U.S.C. § 1001; see House R. XXV(b)(1)(C)(i) (noting that the definition for “institution of higher education,” as used in the Rules, is found in the Higher Education Act). A search for “hospital” on the Department of Education’s “Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs” does not reveal any teaching hospitals. (The only accredited hospitals are those offering nursing, radiology, dietetics, and similar programs -- not those offering standard residency programs.)

12 http://www.aamc.org/members/pme/.
may pay for the member or staffer’s reasonable transportation costs in connection with these events if the hospital does not retain or employ registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.

2. Second Situation

The House gift rules provide that any organization may reimburse a House member or staffer (or pay directly) for “necessary transportation” costs associated with a “one-day event.” House R. XXXV(5)(b)(1)(C)(ii). The event must be “a meeting, speaking engagement, fact-finding trip, or similar event in connection with [the member or staffer’s] official duties” and must not exceed one-day, exclusive of travel time and, generally, an overnight stay. Id. XXV(5)(b)(1)(C). In order for this exception to apply, the House Member or staffer may not be accompanied on any segment of the trip by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal, id. XXV(5)(c)(1)(A), and no registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal may have anything more than a de minimis role in the planning, organization, request, or arrangement of the trip, id. XXV(5)(c)(2).

ii. Senate

As mentioned above, the Senate rules would permit a non-profit teaching hospital to pay for long-distance transportation for Senators and staff in three situations.

1. First Situation

Like the House rules, the new Senate gift rules provide that an entity “other than a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or a private entity that retains or employs 1 or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal” may reimburse a House member or staffer (or pay directly) for “necessary transportation” costs associated with attendance at “a meeting, speaking engagement, fact-finding trip, or similar event in connection with [the Senator or staffer’s] official duties.” S. 1 § 544(a)(1). A non-profit teaching hospital, therefore, may pay for a Senator or staffer’s reasonable transportation costs in connection with PMEs if the hospital does not retain or employ registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.

2. Second Situation

The Senate gift rules provide that a 501(c)(3) corporation may reimburse a Senator or staffer (or pay directly) for “necessary transportation” costs associated with attendance at “a meeting, speaking engagement, fact-finding trip, or similar event in connection with [the member or staffer’s] official duties.” S. 1 § 544(a)(2). This exception does not apply, however, unless (1) no registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal had anything more than a de minimis role in the planning, organization, request, or arrangement of the trip, id. § 544(a)(7), and (2) no registered lobbyist accompanied the Senator or staffer at any point throughout the trip, id. In order for this exception to apply, then, a registered lobbyist could not accompany the Senator or staffer on any leg of the trip and could not even attend the PME events with the Senator or staffer.

3. Third Situation

The Senate gift rules also provide a third alternative that is slightly different than the second. Under this alternative, a registered lobbyist could attend a meeting, lunch, or reception where the
Senator or staffer is present as long the lobbyist does not accompany the Senator or staffer on any “segment of the trip.” *Id.* Unlike the second alternative, however, this alternative does not apply unless the PME is a one-day event. *Id.*

b. **Local Transportation**

*See analysis for long-distance travel offered by a non-profit teaching hospital.* In addition, if the exceptions relevant to long-distance travel do not apply, payment of local transportation costs may be permissible if the PME qualifies as a “widely-attended event,” as analyzed in section 1(b).

c. **Meals**

*See analysis for long-distance travel offered by a non-profit teaching hospital.* Meal costs must be “reasonable” and must not be provided over a period exceeding four days for House Members and staffers and three days for Senators and staffers. In addition, if the exceptions relevant to long-distance travel do not apply, payment of local transportation costs may be permissible if the PME qualifies as a “widely-attended event,” as analyzed in section 1(b).

d. **Lodging**

*See analysis for long-distance travel offered by non-profit teaching hospitals.* Lodging costs must be “reasonable” and may not exceed four days for House Members and staff and three days for Senators and staff.

e. **Incidental Gifts (e.g., scrubs, white coats, inscribed USB sticks)**

No, unless the gifts qualify as “commemorative items” or “items of nominal value.” *See analysis in section 1(e).*

5. **May a private, for-profit teaching hospital pay for the following for members of Congress and their staff in connection with PME programs?**

a. **Long-Distance Transportation**

The House gift rules applicable to PMEs offered by for-profit teaching hospitals with respect to long-distance transportation are the same as those applicable to PMEs offered by non-profit teaching hospitals. The Senate rules are also similar, except that long-distance transportation paid for by for-profit hospitals is only permissible in the first and third situations described above (either the hospital does not employ or retain lobbyists or the trip is limited to one day). The exception that would allow for reimbursement if (1) no registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal had anything more than a de minimis role in the planning, organization, request, or arrangement of the trip and (2) no registered lobbyist accompanied the Senator or staffer at any point throughout the trip does not apply to for-profit institutions. S.1 § 544(a)(7).
b. Local Transportation

See analysis for long-distance travel offered by a for-profit teaching hospital. In addition, if the exceptions relevant to long-distance travel do not apply, payment of local transportation costs may be permissible if the PME qualifies as a “widely-attended event,” as analyzed in section 1(b).

c. Meals

See analysis for long-distance travel offered by a for-profit teaching hospital. Meal costs must be “reasonable” and must not be provided over a period exceeding four days for House Members and staff and three days for Senators and staff. In addition, if the exceptions relevant to long-distance travel do not apply, payment of local transportation costs may be permissible if the PME qualifies as a “widely-attended event,” as analyzed in section 1(b).

d. Lodging

See analysis for long-distance travel offered by for-profit teaching hospitals. Lodging costs must be “reasonable” and may not exceed four days for House Members and staff and three days for Senators and staff.

e. Incidental Gifts (e.g., scrubs, white coats, inscribed USB sticks)

No, unless the gifts qualify as “commemorative items” or “items of nominal value.” See analysis in section 1(e).

III. Concluding Thoughts

In conclusion, this document addressing the United States Senate and House gift rules should be used as guidance as medical schools and teaching hospitals continue to creatively plan and conduct Project Medical Education programs. The AAMC also suggests seeking the advice of the individual institution’s in-house general counsel for further advice about the new rules and how they pertain to the specific entity. The value of Project Medical Education is an invaluable vehicle through which AAMC constituents should continue to share their incredible work with Congress.

VI. Appendices

The following appendices include forms and directions for program sponsors to fill out as described above for certain situations. Additional forms that congressional members and employees must submit can be found at the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct and the Senate Select Committee on Ethics. It is important to remember that both the private sponsor certification and the member/officer/employee traveler forms be submitted with the appropriate committees at the same time in order to process the request.
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Standards of Official Conduct

PRIVATE SPONSOR TRAVEL CERTIFICATION FORM
(provide directly to each House invitee)

This form should be completed by private entities offering to provide travel or reimbursement for travel to House Members, officers or employees under House Rule XXV, clause 5. A completed copy of the form (and any attachments) should be provided to each invited House Member, officer or employee, who will then forward it to the Committee. The trip sponsor should NOT submit the form directly to the Committee.

Private sponsors are urged to submit this form to each House invitee at least 30 days before travel is scheduled to begin. The failure to provide the Committee with adequate time to review the form and attachments may result in the invitee not receiving approval for the trip. The submission of an incomplete form will delay the review process. Before completing this form, sponsors are urged to carefully review the Committee’s private travel guidelines and advisory memoranda detailing the rules and restrictions for private travel, as well as the instructions for completing this form. Sponsors should call the Committee with any questions prior to submitting the form. Please type form.

1. Sponsor(s) (who will be paying for the trip): __________________________________________

2. I represent that the trip will not be financed (in whole or in part) by a federally-registered lobbyist or a registered foreign agent (signify "yes" by checking box): □

3. I represent that the trip sponsor(s) has not accepted from any other source funds earmarked directly or indirectly to finance any aspect of the trip (signify "yes" by checking box): □

4. Is travel being offered to an accompanying family member of the House invitee(s)? □ Yes □ No

5. Provide names and titles of ALL House invitees; for each invitee, provide explanation of why the individual was invited (include additional pages if necessary): __________________________________________

6. Dates of travel: __________________________________________

7. Cities of departure – destination – return: __________________________________________

8. Attached is a detailed agenda of the activities taking place during the travel (i.e., an hourly description of planned activities) (signify "yes" by checking box): □

9. I represent that (check one of the following):
   a. The sponsor of the trip is an institution of higher education within the meaning of section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965: □ or
   b. The sponsor of the trip does not retain or employ a federally registered lobbyist or registered foreign agent: □ or
   c. The trip is for attendance at a one-day event and lobbyist involvement in planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip was de minimis under the Committee’s travel regulations: □

10. If travel is for participation in a one-day event (i.e., if you checked Question 9(c)), check one of the following:
    a. One-night’s lodging and meals are being offered: □ or
    b. Two-nights’ lodging and meals are being offered: □
    If "b" is checked, explain why the second night is warranted: __________________________________________

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11. If the trip is not sponsored by an institution of higher education, I represent that a federally-registered lobbyist or foreign agent will not accompany House Members or employees on any segment of the trip (signify "yes" by checking box): □

12. Private sponsors must have a direct and immediate relationship to the purpose of the trip or location being visited. Describe the role of each sponsor in organizing and conducting the trip:

13. Describe each sponsor’s organizational interest in the purpose of the trip:

14. Describe the type and class of the transportation being provided. Indicate whether coach, business-class or first-class transportation will be provided. In addition, for travel via aircraft, please indicate if travel is being offered on a commercial flight, chartered flight or on an aircraft operated or paid for by a carrier not licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration to operate for compensation or hire (i.e., a private aircraft). If first-class fare is being provided, or if travel is via chartered or private aircraft, please provide an explanation describing why such travel is warranted:

15. I represent that the expenditures related to local area travel during the trip will be unrelated to personal or recreational activities of the invitee(s). (signify "yes" by checking box): □

16. I represent that either (check one of the following):
   a. The trip involves an event that is arranged or organized without regard to congressional participation and that meals provided to congressional participants are similar to those provided to or purchased by other event attendees: □ or
   b. The trip involves events that are arranged or organized specifically with regard to congressional participation: □
      If "b" is checked, detail the cost per day of meals (approximate cost may be provided):

17. Reason for selecting the location of the event or trip:

18. Name of hotel or other lodging facility:

19. Cost per night of hotel or other lodging facility (approximate cost may be provided):

20. Reason(s) for selecting hotel or other lodging facility:
21. **TOTAL EXPENSES FOR EACH PARTICIPANT:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Transportation Expenses per Participant</th>
<th>Total Lodging Expenses per Participant</th>
<th>Total Meal Expenses per Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ actual amounts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ good faith estimates</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each Member, Officer, or employee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>For each accompanying family member</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Other Expenses (dollar amount)</th>
<th>Identify Specific Nature of “Other” Expenses (e.g., taxi, parking, registration fee, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For each Member, Officer, or employee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each accompanying family member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. I represent that reimbursement for miscellaneous travel expenses for the trip, such as travel to and from airports, security costs, interpreter fees, visa application fees, and similar expenses, will be for actual costs incurred and are necessary for the purpose of the trip (signify “yes” by checking box): □

23. I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: ________________________________

Name and title: ________________________________

Organization: ________________________________

Address: ________________________________

Telephone number: ________________________________

Fax number: ________________________________

Email Address: ________________________________

The Committee staff may contact the above individual above if additional information is required.

If there are any questions regarding this form please contact the Committee at the following address:

Committee on Standards of Official Conduct
U.S. House of Representatives
HT-2, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-7103 (phone)
(202) 225-7392 (general fax)
(202) 226-7172 (fax for travel approvals)

*Version date 4/2007 by Committee on Standards of Official Conduct*
Privately-Sponsored Travel Checklist

This checklist is designed to help Senate travelers and sponsors comply with the new requirements for privately-sponsored trips. Senators, Officers, and staff members now must submit all their travel information to the Ethics Committee at least 30 days before they leave on a privately-sponsored trip. To meet that deadline, sponsors should begin the invitation process as early as possible. All the forms and materials listed below are available on the Ethics Committee Web site (ethics.senate.gov) or at its office (Hart 220).

Please note that before submitting a travel package to the Ethics Committee, Members, Officers and employees must determine that the expenses for the trip are necessary and reasonable. Therefore, Senate travelers and their supervisors should make sure they understand the rules and guidelines for privately-sponsored travel, which can be found on the Ethics Committee Web site.

30 Days Before Trip: Submit Completed Travel Request Package to the Ethics Committee

The Senate Ethics Committee cannot begin reviewing a proposed trip by Members, Officers, or employees until it receives their completed travel package. Here is what it should include:

- **Copy of Private Sponsor Invitation**

  Senators, Officers, and Employees who want to attend a privately-sponsored fact-finding trip must first receive a letter of invitation from the sponsors and submit a copy of it to the Ethics Committee.

- **Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form**

  Sponsors of private travel must also provide all Senate invitees with a signed and completed travel certification form, which includes information about the trip’s sponsors, purpose, length, itinerary, and expenses. Senate invitees must submit a copy of this form and any attachments to the Ethics Committee.

- **Copy of Employee Travel Advance Authorization and Disclosure Form—Part 1**

  To receive authorization for travel, Senate employees must fill out Part 1 of this form and have their supervising Senator or Senate Officer sign it after determining that the proposed travel is connected to official duties and will not
create any appearance of a public office being used for private gain. Members and Officers do not have to fill out this form.

Before Traveling: Receive Letter of Approval from Ethics Committee

☐ Letter from the Ethics Committee

After receiving the completed travel package, the Ethics Committee will review it as quickly as possible and will contact the Senate traveler or private sponsor with any necessary follow-up questions. The Committee will then issue a letter to the Member, Officer, or employee.

Within 30 Days after Returning from Travel: Forms to Complete and File

☐ Members and Officers

Within 30 days after returning from a privately-sponsored trip, Members and Senate Officers must fill out the “Disclosure of Senator’s/Officer’s Reimbursed/Paid Travel Expenses” form. That disclosure form and a copy of the Private Sponsor Travel Certification form must then be filed with the Office of Public Records in Hart 232. By doing so, Members and Officers make a determination that the travel was in connection with their duties as an officeholder and did not create the appearance of using public office for private gain.

☐ Employees

Within 30 days after returning from a privately-sponsored trip, Senate employees must complete Part 2 of the Employee Advance Travel Authorization and Disclosure form, which lists expenses reimbursed to them or paid for them. The form must be signed by both the employees and their supervising Senator or Officer after making a determination the trip expenses listed are necessary under Senate rules. Employees must then file the entire form and a copy of Private Sponsor Travel Certification form with the Office of Public Records in Hart 232.

Please contact the Ethics Committee staff at (202) 224-2981, if you have any questions.
PRIVATE SPONSOR TRAVEL CERTIFICATION FORM

This form must be completed by any private entity offering to provide travel or reimbursement for travel to Senate Members, Officers, or employees (Senate Rule 35, clause 2). Each sponsor of a fact-finding trip must sign the completed form. The trip sponsor(s) must provide a copy of the completed form to each invited Senate traveler, who will then forward it to the Ethics Committee with any other required materials. The trip sponsor(s) should NOT submit the form directly to the Committee. Please consult the accompanying instructions for more detailed definitions and other key information.

The Senate Member, Officer or employee MUST also provide a copy of this form, along with the appropriate travel authorization and reimbursement form, to the Office of Public Records, Room 232 of the Hart Building, within thirty (30) days after the travel is completed.

1. Sponsor(s) of the trip (please list all sponsors):

2. Description of the trip:

3. Dates of travel:

4. Place of travel:

5. Name and title of Senate invitees:

6. I certify that the trip fits one of the following categories:
   ☐ The sponsor(s) are not registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal and do not retain or employ registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal and no lobbyist will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip (see Committee regulations):
   OR
   ☐ The sponsor or sponsors are not registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal, but retain or employ one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal and the trip meets the requirements of Senate Rule 35.2(a)(2)(A)(i) or (ii) (See Question 9)

7. ☐ I certify that the trip will not be financed in any part by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal:
   AND
   ☐ I certify that the sponsor or sponsors will not accept funds or in-kind contributions earmarked directly or indirectly for the purpose of financing this specific trip from a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or from a private entity that retains or employs one or more registered lobbyists:

8. I certify that:
   ☐ The trip will not in any part be planned, organized, requested or arranged by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal except for de minimis lobbyist involvement (see Committee regulations):
   AND
   ☐ The traveler will not be accompanied on the trip by a registered lobbyist except as provided for by Committee regulations relating to lobbyist accompaniment (See question 9)
9. USE ONLY IF YOU CHECKED QUESTION 6(B).
I certify that if the sponsor or sponsors retain or employ one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal, one of the following scenarios applies:

☐ The trip is for attendance or participation in a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and one overnight stay) and no registered lobbyist will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip (see Committee regulations):

OR

☐ The trip is for attendance or participation in a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and two overnight stays) and no registered lobbyist will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip (See Question 6):

OR

☐ The trip is being sponsored only by an organization or organizations designated under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and no registered lobbyist will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip (see Committee regulations)

10. If the trip includes two overnight stays, please explain why the second night is practically required for Senate invitees to participate in the travel:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

11. ☐ An itinerary for the trip is attached to this form. I certify that the attached itinerary is a detailed (hour-by-hour), complete, and final itinerary for the trip.

12. Briefly describe the role of each sponsor in organizing and conducting the trip:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

13. Briefly describe the stated mission of each sponsor and how the purpose of the trip relates to that mission:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

14. Briefly describe each sponsor’s prior history of sponsoring congressional trips:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

15. Briefly describe the educational activities performed by each sponsor (other than sponsoring congressional trips):

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

16. Total Expenses for Each Participant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transportation Expenses</th>
<th>Lodging Expenses</th>
<th>Meal Expenses</th>
<th>Other Expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Good Faith estimate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Actual Amount</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. State whether a) the trip involves an event that is arranged or organized without regard to congressional participation or b) the trip involves events that are arranged or organized specifically with regard to congressional participation:

________________________________________________________________________

Private Sponsor Certification - Page 2 of 3
18. Reason for selecting the location of the event or trip: ________________________________

19. Name and location of hotel or other lodging facility: ______________________________

20. Reason(s) for selecting hotel or other lodging facility: ____________________________

21. Describe how the daily expenses for lodging, meals, and other expenses provided to trip participants compares to the maximum per diem rates for official Federal Government travel:

22. Describe the type and class of transportation being provided. Indicate whether coach, business-class or first class transportation will be provided. If first-class fare is being provided, please explain why first-class travel is necessary: ________________________________________________________________

23. ☐ I represent that the travel expenses that will be paid for or reimbursed to Senate invitees do not include expenditures for recreational activities or entertainment (other than entertainment provided to all attendees as an integral part of the event, as permissible under Senate Rule 35)

24. List any entertainment that will be provided to, paid for, or reimbursed to Senate invitees and explain why the entertainment is an integral part of the event: ________________________________________________________________

25. I hereby certify that the information contained herein is true, complete and correct. (You must include the completed signature block below for each travel sponsor):

   Signature of Travel Sponsor: ____________________________
   Name and Title: ______________________________________
   Name of Organization: ________________________________
   Address: ____________________________________________
   Telephone Number: _________________________________
   Fax Number: ________________________________________
   E-mail Address: ____________________________________
Instructions
(Do not file the Instructions & Definitions with OPR)

General Instructions

- The Senate Select Committee on Ethics ("Ethics Committee") has developed guidelines for evaluating privately-sponsored trips and for judging whether trip expenses are reasonable. Trip sponsors should consult the Senate Select Committee on Ethics' Regulations and Guidelines for Privately-Sponsored Travel, including the Glossary of Terms, prior to filling out the Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form and contact the Ethics Committee at (202)224-2981 with any additional questions. The Ethics Committee will make the final determination as to whether the expenses incurred during a privately-sponsored trip are reasonable.

- If there are multiple sponsors, they should jointly complete one Private Sponsor Travel Certification for the trip. Each travel sponsor should complete the signature block.

- When evaluating a trip proposal and judging the reasonableness of expenses, the Ethics Committee will consider the following factors:
  a. The stated mission of the organization sponsoring the trip;
  b. The organization’s prior history of sponsoring congressional trips, if any;
  c. Other educational activities performed by the organization besides sponsoring congressional trips;
  d. Whether any trips previously sponsored by the organization led to an investigation by the Select Committee on Ethics;
  e. Whether the length of the trip and the itinerary is consistent with the official purpose of the trip;
  f. Whether there is an adequate connection between a trip and official duties;
  g. The reasonableness of the total amount spent by a sponsor of the trip;
  h. Whether there is a direct and immediate relationship between a source of funding and an event;
  i. The maximum per diem rates for official Federal Government travel published annually by the General Services Administration, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense;
  j. Whether travel to a location or event is arranged or organized without regard to congressional participation, or whether it is specifically organized for Congressional staff; and
  k. Any other factor deemed relevant by the Select Committee on Ethics.

Consult the Senate Select Committee on Ethics' Regulations and Guidelines for Privately-Sponsored Travel, including the Glossary of Terms, for further discussion of these factors.

- Responses to each question should be brief, consistent with the requirement to provide all relevant information. Attach additional pages, as necessary.

- All references to “Committee regulations” on the Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form are to the Senate Select Committee on Ethics’ Regulations and Guidelines for Privately-Sponsored Travel, including the Glossary of Terms.

- To allow sufficient time for the Ethics Committee to review requests for privately sponsored travel, the trip sponsor should submit the completed form to participating Members, officers and employees at least thirty (30) days before the date of the proposed trip.
Filling out the Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form (Question by Question Instructions)

1. **Sponsor(s) of the trip (please list all sponsors):** A sponsor of a trip is any person, organization, or other entity contributing funds or in-kind support for the trip. A sponsor must have a significant role in organizing and conducting a trip and must have a specific organizational interest in the purpose of the trip. If Members, officers and employees are participating in an event or fact-finding trip in connection with their duties, they may accept necessary travel expenses only from the event or trip sponsor.

2. **Description of the trip:** Provide a brief statement about the purpose of the trip.

3. **Dates of travel:** Provide the dates of departure and return.

4. **Place of travel:** Provide the destination(s) for the trip.

5. **Name and titles of Senate invitees:** Provide the name and title for each Senate Member, officer or employee who is invited on the trip.

6. **I certify that the trip fits one of the following categories:** A Senate Member, officer or employee may only accept privately sponsored travel from sponsor(s) of a trip that fits one of the categories listed. Consult Question 9 and the Definitions below for additional more information about the lobbyist accompaniment standards.

7. **Financing of the trip, earmarked funds and in-kind contributions:** Senate Members, officers and staff may not accept privately-sponsored travel funded by a registered lobbyist or foreign agent. Members, officers and staff may not participate in privately-sponsored travel when the sponsors accept funds or in-kind contributions earmarked for this particular trip from a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or from a private entity that retains or employs one or more registered lobbyists. Earmarking includes any direction, agreement, or suggestion--formal or informal--to use donated funds, goods, services or other in-kind contributions for a particular trip or purpose.

8. **Lobbyist involvement:** Consult the “Definitions” section below to determine whether the trip meets the requirements for lobbyist involvement. See Question 9 to determine if the lobbyist accompaniment standards are met.

9. **Lobbyist accompaniment standards:** See the “Definitions” section below to determine which scenario fits the proposed trip. Senate Members, officers and staff may not accept privately-sponsored travel from an entity that retains or employs one or more federally-registered lobbyists or foreign agents unless one of the listed scenarios apply.

10. **If travel includes two overnight stays:** The Committee may approve two overnight stays for trips sponsored by an entity that employs or retains one or more lobbyists or foreign agents under certain conditions. Consult Committee regulations for additional information.

11. **An itinerary for the trip is attached to this form:** The Committee will not review the trip request without a detailed (hour-by-hour), complete and final itinerary for the trip. As a general matter, the Committee advises that each travel day contain a minimum of 6 hours of officially-related activities for Senate invitees.

12. **Briefly describe the role of each sponsor in organizing and conducting the trip:** A sponsor must have a significant role in organizing and conducting a trip and must have a specific organizational interest in the purpose of the trip.

13. **Briefly describe the stated mission of each sponsor and how the purpose of the trip relates to that mission:** Provide a brief description of the stated mission of each sponsor and how it relates to the trip.

Instructions & Definitions - Page 2 of 4
14. Briefly describe each sponsor’s prior history of sponsoring congressional trips: Provide a brief discussion of the sponsor’s history of sponsoring congressional travel. It is not necessary to list every trip.

15. Briefly describe the educational activities performed by each sponsor (other than sponsoring congressional trips): Provide a brief description of the educational activities performed by each sponsor. It is not necessary to list every individual activity; description may be by kind or category of educational activity.

16. Total expenses for each participant: Indicate whether the figures provided are actual amounts or good faith estimates by checking the appropriate box. All trip expenses should be included. Expenses other than those for transportation, lodging and meals must be individually listed and specified. Attached additional pages as necessary.

17. Congressional participation: For events that are arranged without regard to congressional participation (for example, annual meetings, conferences, seminars, and symposiums of trade associations, professional societies, business associations, and other membership organizations), the Committee may, but is not required to, allow Senate Members, officers and employees to accept lodging and meal expenses that are commensurate with what is customarily provided to non-congressional attendees in similar circumstances. For events specifically arranged around congressional participation, lodging, meal expenses and other expenses must be “reasonable” in accordance with Committee regulations.

18. Reason for selecting the location of the event or trip: The location of the trip must be related to its purpose.

19. Name and location of hotel or other lodging facility: Self-explanatory.

20. Reasons for selecting hotel or other lodging facility: Provide an explanation of the sponsor’s rationale for selecting the particular lodging, include information such as proximity to the airport or site to be visited.

21. Describe how the daily expenses for lodging, meals, and other expenses provided to trip participant compare to the maximum per diem rates for official Federal Government travel: Where feasible and available, trip expenses for lodging and meals should generally be comparable to the government per diem rates. The circumstances surrounding a particular trip may legitimately require lodging and meal expenses to exceed these rates. Consult the Ethics Committee regulations for additional information.

22. Describe the type and class of transportation being provided: While coach or business-class fare may be accepted, first-class fare for any mode of transportation may be permitted only under limited conditions and only with specific prior written approval by the Ethics Committee. Transportation on a private or charter aircraft is not permitted for privately-sponsored travel under any circumstances.

23. Expenses for recreational activity or entertainment: The only recreational or entertainment activities that will be approved by the Committee are those that are provided to all attendees and are an integral part of an event.

24. List any entertainment that will be provided to, paid for or reimbursed to Senate invitees and explain why the entertainment is an integral part of the event: Entertainment expenses that are not provided to all attendees and deemed an integral part of the event will not be approved by the Committee.

25. Certification: Each sponsor of a trip should sign the form and certify that the information is complete and correct. Attach additional pages with the certification and signature block, as necessary, for each trip sponsor.
V. USEFUL WEBSITES

United States House of Representatives Committee on Standards of Official Conduct
http://www.house.gov/ethics/

United States Senate Select Committee on Ethics
http://ethics.senate.gov/

General Services Administration
domestic per diem rates at particular destinations
http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentId=17943&contentType=GSA_BASIC.