

United States Senate

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 220
SECOND AND CONSTITUTION AVENUE, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6425

January 3, 2013

Dear Colleague:

The Select Committee on Ethics anticipates that Senate Members and staff will receive invitations to attend events held in connection with the Presidential Inauguration, so it is reissuing guidance on the application of the Senate Gifts Rule to such events.

All current Gifts Rule restrictions (including gifts from federal lobbyists) and exceptions apply during the Presidential Inauguration. For your information, the exceptions that most commonly apply to Inaugural events are as follows:

1. The rule permits free attendance at a **widely attended event** at the invitation of the event sponsor. According to the *Senate Ethics Manual*, at 41-42 (2003 ed.), under this large-group exception, a Member or staffer may accept an offer of free attendance from the Presidential Inaugural Committee or another private organization for an event sponsored by the entity if at least 25 persons from outside Congress are expected to attend, the event is open to members from throughout a given industry or profession, or to a range of persons interested in an issue, and the Member or staffer determines that attendance is appropriately connected with his or her official duties or position. Free attendance permits the acceptance of local transportation, food, refreshments, or entertainment that are part of the event.
2. An invitation to a **reception** may be accepted, including food or refreshment of nominal value (offered other than as part of a meal).
3. The rule permits free attendance at a **charity event** at the invitation of the event sponsor, including the acceptance of local transportation, food, refreshments, or entertainment that are a part of the event.
4. The rule permits acceptance of a gift paid for by any unit of **federal, state, or local government**. Thus, Senate Members and staff may accept tickets to inaugural-related events from federal, state, or local government entities.
5. The rule permits free attendance at a **fundraising event** sponsored by a political organization. Tickets to a campaign event that is not a fundraiser may be accepted only from the sponsoring political organization.
6. Additionally, accepting a **T-shirt or baseball cap** of limited value is permitted by the rule, and accepting **non-food items that have a combined total value of \$10 or less** is also permitted.

Please contact the Committee at (202) 224-2981 with any questions.



Barbara Boxer
Chairman

Sincerely,



Johnny Isakson
Vice Chairman