



Internet Services and Technology Resources Usage Rules

Adopted by the Committee on Rules and Administration on Nov. 9, 2015

1. **DEFINITIONS**

For purposes of these Rules, the following terms shall have the meaning specified –

1. Senate Office. Means –

1. A Member or Member office;
2. A Committee Chair, Committee Ranking Member or Committee office;
3. Senate Officers; and
4. Leadership Offices.

2. Senate Rules Committee. Means the U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

3. Senate Internet Services. Include, but are not limited to, the Senate Computer Network, World Wide Web, electronic mail, blogs, Podcasts, and streaming media used for official purposes.

4. Senate Technology Resources. Include, but are not limited to, –

1. Hardware such as servers, computers, laptops, telephones, cell phones, wireless devices, and software that are owned, managed, maintained, leased, or otherwise provided by the U.S. Senate or a Senate office; and
2. Handheld communications devices, including tablet computers, and associated information technology services, including dual use devices that meet the limited exception provided by the Senate Select Committee on Ethics.

5. Official Senate Office Website. Means a website supported by Senate resources and dedicated to official business of the Senate Office.

6. Official Third-Party Website. A Third-Party Website means any

website or online application, profile, or channel residing outside of the Senate.gov domain and available to the general public, including but not limited to social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.). An Official Third-Party Website is a Third-Party Website that a Senate Office uses for official business pursuant to these rules.

7. Official Website. Means an Official Senate Office Website or Official Third-Party Website.
8. Official Business. Means activities and duties which directly or indirectly pertain to the legislative process or to any congressional representative functions generally, or to the functioning, working, or operating of the Congress and the performance of official duties in connection therewith, and shall include, but not be limited to, the conveying of information to the public, and the requesting and collection of the views of the public (including through surveys, opinion polls, and web data analytics), or the views and information of other governmental entities, as a guide or a means of assistance in the performance of those functions.
9. Campaign Purposes. Include, but are not limited to, –
 1. Solicitation of political support for the sender or any other person or political party, or a vote or financial assistance for any candidate for any political office; or
 2. Matter which mentions a Member or a staff member of a Member as a candidate for political office, or which constitutes electioneering, or which advocates the election or defeat of any individuals, or a political party.
10. Commercial Purposes. Include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect pursuit of private commercial business activities or profit-making ventures or advertising therefor, direct or indirect solicitation of funds or the purchase of goods or services, and identification and solicitation of investors or other sources of capital for for-profit enterprises.
11. Fundraising Purposes. Include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect solicitation of funds, pledges or other types of contributions, e.g., for political parties or campaigns, nonprofit or charitable organizations, or disaster or humanitarian relief efforts.
12. Promotional Purposes. Include, but are not limited to, publicizing or advertising a product, organization, institution, or venture so as to increase sales or public awareness.

2. SCOPE, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND PROHIBITED USES

1. Official Business Use Only. Use of Senate Internet Services and Senate technology resources is for activities and duties directly connected with the official business of the Senate.
2. Prohibited Uses. Use of Senate Internet Services and Senate technology resources for campaign, fundraising, commercial, or promotional purposes is prohibited, except for authorized "dual use devices" which, subject to certain restrictions, may be used for both campaign and official business purposes.
3. Use of Official Websites. Information provided on or through an Official Website must relate to activities and duties directly connected with the official and representational business of the Senate.
4. Oversight of Internet and Information Security. It is the responsibility of each Senate office to oversee the use of Senate Internet Services and Senate technology resources by that office and to ensure their use is consistent with the requirements of these Rules and applicable laws and regulations. The office has sole responsibility for effectively applying and complying with information security guidelines set out by the Senate Sergeant-At-Arms.
5. Decorum Rule. Use of Senate Internet Services and Senate technology resources to impute to another Senator or to other Senators any conduct or motive unworthy or unbecoming a Senator, or to refer offensively to any State of the Union, is prohibited.
6. Personal Use. Senate Internet Services and Senate technology resources are provided for the conduct of official business. Personal use is permitted on a *de minimis* basis only in a manner that does not supersede or contradict these Rules such as the general rule prohibiting the use of Senate Internet Resources and Senate technology resources for campaign, fundraising, commercial and promotional purposes.

3. OFFICIAL SENATE OFFICE WEBSITES

1. Host Domain. An Official Senate Office Website must be located in the "senate.gov" host domain.
2. URL Name. The URL name of an Official Senate Office Website located in the "senate.gov" domain is limited to one of the following formulations –
 1. Member Website. Must contain the Member's last name.
 2. Committee or Senate Officer Website, including a Committee website maintained by the Committee Chair or

the Committee Ranking Member. Must contain the name of the Committee or title of the Senate Officer.

3. Leadership Offices. Must contain the name of, or acronym for, the office. For example, the offices of the Senate Majority Leader, Senate Minority Leader, Senate Majority Whip and Senate Minority Whip websites may utilize: Majority Leader, Majority Whip, Minority Leader, Minority Whip, Republican Leader, Republican Whip, Democratic Leader, Democratic Whip, as appropriate, to access the website directly or via a URL redirection. Web domains are to be surrendered in the event of a change in leadership.
3. Task Force, Caucus, and Issue-Oriented Websites. Use of the "senate.gov" host domain for task force, caucus, or other issue-oriented websites is prohibited. However, this does not prohibit a Member from referencing such issues or a task force on an Official Website.
4. Senate Staff. Senate staff are prohibited from establishing or maintaining an Official Senate Office Website in their own name in the "senate.gov" domain.

4. OFFICIAL THIRD-PARTY WEBSITES AND OFFICIAL ACCOUNTS

1. In General. A Senate office may maintain an official account or official public profile for each Official Third-Party Website.
2. The Senate Rules Committee maintains a non-exhaustive list of approved sites that have a terms-of-service agreement with the Senate. Use of an Official Third- Party Website not on the approved list may be restricted for security reasons and/or for failure to comply with applicable Senate rules and regulations.
3. An Official Third-Party Website shall identify itself as follows –
 1. Member. The username, display name, or title of the Member's website must include the title "U.S. Senator" or an abbreviation thereof and the Member's last name.
 2. Committee. The username, display name, or title of the website, including one maintained by the Committee Chair or the Committee Ranking Member, must include the name of the Committee or an abbreviation thereof, but may not include a Member's name.
 3. Senate Officer. The username, display name, or title of a Senate Officer's website must include the name of the Office or an abbreviation thereof, but may not include the Officer's name.

4. Leadership Office. The username, display name, or title of the Leadership Office website must include the name of the Office or an abbreviation thereof.
5. Identifying Statement. The website shall display a statement identifying the account or profile as the "official account of" the Member, Committee, Leadership Office, or Senate Officer, as applicable.
4. Use of the Senate Seal. Use of any likeness of the Seal of the United States Senate on a non-Senate website or application is prohibited.
5. Security. Use of an Official Third-Party Website determined to pose a possible threat to the security of the Senate computer network shall be discontinued, per the direction of the Senate Rules Committee, until the risk is fully assessed and the risk mitigated to a level acceptable to the Senate Rules Committee.
6. Last Day of a Member's Term. A Member's official account on an Official Third-Party Website cannot be supported by Senate resources beyond the last day of the Member's term. Official Third-Party Websites must be deactivated or converted at the expiration of the term. Converted third-party websites cannot be supported with Senate resources and may no longer be identified as official.

5. LINKS BETWEEN WEBSITES

1. The following is prohibited –
 1. Linking or posting from an Official Website to campaign, fundraising, commercial, or promotional sites except as provided for in section 5.3.
 2. Linking or posting from an Official Website to a Member's campaign or personal website.
 3. Linking or posting from a campaign website controlled by or under the direction of a Member or group of Members to an Official Website.
2. The following is permitted –
 1. Linking or posting from an Official Website to another Official Website of the same Member.
 2. Linking or posting from an Official Website to another Member, Committee, Leadership Office, or Senate Officer's Official Website.

3. Linking or posting from a Member's personal website to a Member's Official Website.
 4. Linking or posting from a Member's Official Website to an official government website, including an official federal, state, or local government site.
3. Linking or posting from an Official Website to non-governmental sites (including commercial and promotional sites) only for official business purposes is permitted, provided the Senate office does not endorse, direct, control, support or discourage action by the non-governmental organization by means of the post or link. Links to fundraising or campaign sites do not fit within this exception and are prohibited.

6. SPECIAL RULES FOR 60 DAY MORATORIUM PERIOD

1. For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the meaning specified –
 1. Moratorium period. Means the 60 days immediately preceding the date of any primary or general election (whether regular, special, or runoff) in which the Member is a candidate.
 2. Uncontested candidate. When the Senate Rules Committee receives written certification from the appropriate state official that the Member's candidacy may not be contested under state law, that candidate is uncontested. A Member running for re-election in a state that permits write-in votes for the Member's election shall be considered a contested candidate and is subject to the restrictions in this section.
 3. Mass communication. Means an electronic communication including, but not limited to, posting to an Official Website, automated telephone calls for events such as Tele-Town Halls, and electronic mail transmission of substantially identical content to 500 or more recipients.
2. During the moratorium period, no Member office may seek constituent input or inquiries (such as online petitions or opinion polls) via a mass communication using Senate Internet Services unless the Member is an uncontested candidate. Nor shall a Member do so on behalf of another Member unless the other Member is an uncontested candidate.
3. No Member office may transmit an unsolicited mass communication during the moratorium period unless the Member

is an uncontested candidate. A mass communication to a subscriber list or a post on an Official Website available to voluntary followers is deemed to be solicited and is therefore permitted during the moratorium period (subject to the limitations of 6.2).

4. Communications in the normal course of Senate official business such as in direct response to a constituent, another Member of Congress, or a federal, state or local government official and a news release to the communications media are permitted during the moratorium period.
5. A Member subject to the restrictions in this section shall display the following statement on the Member's Official Senate Website homepage: "Pursuant to Senate Policy, petitions, opinion polls and unsolicited mass electronic communications cannot be initiated by this office for the 60-day period immediately before the date of a primary or general election. Subscribers currently receiving electronic communications from this office who wish to unsubscribe may do so [here \(link\)](#)." The words "Senate Policy" must be hypertext linked to these rules displayed on the Member's home page.
6. A Member may not use another Senate office such as a Senate committee to circumvent these Rules.