

Franking Changes due to COVID-19

Sending Office: Honorable Susan A. Davis
Sent By: Brandon.Mendoza@mail.house.gov

Dear Colleague,

With the recent passage of the CARES Act, the Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards (Commission) is providing Members with an update to recent guidance regarding the use of the Congressional frank for postal mailers related to COVID-19.

The CARES Act updated statutory provisions in Title 39, which provide the Commission authority to waive blackout restrictions so Members may use franked mail for communications related to threats to life safety. The Commission recently used this new authority to unanimously update the House Communication Standards Manual and waive the blackout restriction for unsolicited mass postal mail sent in response to or addressing COVID-19.

As a reminder, Members are generally limited from sending mass mailings and mass communications in the “blackout period,” the 90 days prior to any primary or general election or caucus for any federal, state, or local election in which the Member is a candidate. However, this update to the Commission regulations now expressly permits Members to send all types of communications regarding threats to life safety, including postal mail.

This exception to the blackout restrictions is intended to serve the bona fide purpose of protecting life and safety. Communications sent under this exception must reflect that by including only germane information, resources, and materials. Communications sent under this exception are required to receive an Advisory Opinion through the standard request process in the online portal.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Commission Majority at 202-225-9337, or Minority at 202-226-0647.

Sincerely,

Susan Davis

Chairwoman

Bryan Steil

Ranking Member