

TITLE 18 - CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE**PART I - CRIMES****CHAPTER 11 - BRIBERY, GRAFT, AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST****§ 208. Acts affecting a personal financial interest**

(a) Except as permitted by subsection (b) hereof, whoever, being an officer or employee of the executive branch of the United States Government, or of any independent agency of the United States, a Federal Reserve bank director, officer, or employee, or an officer or employee of the District of Columbia, including a special Government employee, participates personally and substantially as a Government officer or employee, through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, the rendering of advice, investigation, or otherwise, in a judicial or other proceeding, application, request for a ruling or other determination, contract, claim, controversy, charge, accusation, arrest, or other particular matter in which, to his knowledge, he, his spouse, minor child, general partner, organization in which he is serving as officer, director, trustee, general partner or employee, or any person or organization with whom he is negotiating or has any arrangement concerning prospective employment, has a financial interest—

Shall be subject to the penalties set forth in section 216 of this title.

(b) Subsection (a) shall not apply—

(1) if the officer or employee first advises the Government official responsible for appointment to his or her position of the nature and circumstances of the judicial or other proceeding, application, request for a ruling or other determination, contract, claim, controversy, charge, accusation, arrest, or other particular matter and makes full disclosure of the financial interest and receives in advance a written determination made by such official that the interest is not so substantial as to be deemed likely to affect the integrity of the services which the Government may expect from such officer or employee;

(2) if, by regulation issued by the Director of the Office of Government Ethics, applicable to all or a portion of all officers and employees covered by this section, and published in the Federal Register, the financial interest has been exempted from the requirements of subsection (a) as being too remote or too inconsequential to affect the integrity of the services of the Government officers or employees to which such regulation applies;

(3) in the case of a special Government employee serving on an advisory committee within the meaning of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (including an individual being considered for an appointment to such a position), the official responsible for the employee's appointment, after review of the financial disclosure report filed by the individual pursuant to the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, certifies in writing that the need for the individual's services outweighs the potential for a conflict of interest created by the financial interest involved; or

(4) if the financial interest that would be affected by the particular matter involved is that resulting solely from the interest of the officer or employee, or his or her spouse or minor child, in birthrights—

(A) in an Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians,

(B) in an Indian allotment the title to which is held in trust by the United States or which is inalienable by the allottee without the consent of the United States, or

(C) in an Indian claims fund held in trust or administered by the United States,

if the particular matter does not involve the Indian allotment or claims fund or the Indian tribe, band, nation, organized group or community, or Alaska Native village corporation as a specific party or parties.

NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 4, 2012 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscprint.html>).

- (c) (1) For the purpose of paragraph (1) of subsection (b), in the case of class A and B directors of Federal Reserve banks, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System shall be deemed to be the Government official responsible for appointment.
- (2) The potential availability of an exemption under any particular paragraph of subsection (b) does not preclude an exemption being granted pursuant to another paragraph of subsection (b).
- (d) (1) Upon request, a copy of any determination granting an exemption under subsection (b)(1) or (b)(3) shall be made available to the public by the agency granting the exemption pursuant to the procedures set forth in section 105 of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978. In making such determination available, the agency may withhold from disclosure any information contained in the determination that would be exempt from disclosure under section 552 of title 5. For purposes of determinations under subsection (b)(3), the information describing each financial interest shall be no more extensive than that required of the individual in his or her financial disclosure report under the Ethics in Government Act of 1978.
- (2) The Office of Government Ethics, after consultation with the Attorney General, shall issue uniform regulations for the issuance of waivers and exemptions under subsection (b) which shall—
- (A) list and describe exemptions; and
- (B) provide guidance with respect to the types of interests that are not so substantial as to be deemed likely to affect the integrity of the services the Government may expect from the employee.

(Added Pub. L. 87–849, § 1(a), Oct. 23, 1962, 76 Stat. 1124; amended Pub. L. 95–188, title II, § 205, Nov. 16, 1977, 91 Stat. 1388; Pub. L. 101–194, title IV, § 405, Nov. 30, 1989, 103 Stat. 1751; Pub. L. 101–280, § 5(e), May 4, 1990, 104 Stat. 159; Pub. L. 103–322, title XXXIII, §§ 330002(b), 330008 (6), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2140, 2143.)

References in Text

The Federal Advisory Committee Act, referred to in subsec. (b)(3), is Pub. L. 92–463, Oct. 6, 1972, 86 Stat. 770, as amended, which is set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

The Ethics in Government Act of 1978, referred to in subsecs. (b)(3) and (d)(1), is Pub. L. 95–521, Oct. 26, 1978, 92 Stat. 1824, as amended. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 101 of Pub. L. 95–521 in the Appendix to Title 5 and Tables.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, referred to in subsec. (b)(4)(A), is Pub. L. 92–203, Dec. 18, 1971, 85 Stat. 688, as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 33 (§ 1601 et seq.) of Title 43, Public Lands. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1601 of Title 43 and Tables.

Prior Provisions

A prior section 208, act June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 693, related to the acceptance of solicitation of a bribe by a judicial officer, prior to the general amendment of this chapter by Pub. L. 87–849 and is substantially covered by revised section 201.

Provisions similar to those comprising this section were contained in section 434 of this title prior to the repeal of such section and the general amendment of this chapter by Pub. L. 87–849.

Amendments

1994—Subsec. (b)(4). Pub. L. 103–322, § 330008(6), inserted “if” after “(4)”.

Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 103–322, § 330002(b), substituted “banks” for “Banks”.

1990—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 101–280, § 5(e)(2), made technical correction to directory language of Pub. L. 101–194, § 405(1)(C). See 1989 Amendment note below.

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 101–280, § 5(e)(1)(A), substituted “subsection (a)” for “paragraph (1)”.

Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 101–280, § 5(e)(1)(B), struck out “section 107 of” after “individual pursuant to”.

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Subsec. (d)(1). Pub. L. 101–280, § 5(e)(1)(C), amended par. (1) generally. Prior to amendment, par. (1) read as follows: “A copy of any determination by other than the Director of the Office of Government Ethics granting an exemption pursuant to subsection (b)(1) or (b)(3) shall be submitted to the Director, who shall make all determinations available to the public pursuant to section 105 of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978. For determinations pursuant to subsection (b)(3), the information from the financial disclosure report of the officer or employee involved describing the asset or assets that necessitated the waiver shall also be made available to the public. This subsection shall not apply, however, if the head of the agency or his or her designee determines that the determination under subsection (b)(1) or (b)(3), as the case may be, involves classified information.”

1989—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 101–194, § 405(1), as amended by Pub. L. 101–280, § 5(e)(2), inserted “or” after “United States Government,” and “an officer or employee” before “of the District of Columbia”, substituted “general partner” for “partner” in two places, and substituted “Shall be subject to the penalties set forth in section 216 of this title” for “Shall be fined not more than \$10,000, or imprisoned not more than two years, or both”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 101–194, § 405(2), added subsec. (b) and struck out former subsec. (b), which read as follows: “Subsection (a) hereof shall not apply (1) if the officer or employee first advises the Government official responsible for appointment to his position of the nature and circumstances of the judicial or other proceeding, application, request for a ruling or other determination, contract, claim, controversy, charge, accusation, arrest, or other particular matter and makes full disclosure of the financial interest and receives in advance a written determination made by such official that the interest is not so substantial as to be deemed likely to affect the integrity of the services which the Government may expect from such officer or employee, or (2) if, by general rule or regulation published in the Federal Register, the financial interest has been exempted from the requirements of clause (1) hereof as being too remote or too inconsequential to affect the integrity of Government officers’ or employees’ services. In the case of class A and B directors of Federal Reserve banks, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System shall be the Government official responsible for appointment.”

Subsecs. (c), (d). Pub. L. 101–194, § 405(2), added subsecs. (c) and (d).

1977—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 95–188, § 205(a), extended conflicts of interest prohibition to a Federal Reserve bank director, officer, or employee.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 95–188, § 205(b), inserted at end “In the case of class A and B directors of Federal Reserve banks, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System shall be the Government official responsible for appointment.”

Effective Date

Section effective 90 days after Oct. 23, 1962, see section 4 of Pub. L. 87–849, set out as a note under section 201 of this title.

Exemptions

Exemptions from former section 434 of this title deemed to be exemptions from this section, see section 2 of Pub. L. 87–849, set out as a note under section 203 of this title.

Regulations

Responsibility of Office of Government Ethics for promulgating regulations and interpreting this section, see section 201(c) of Ex. Ord. No. 12674, Apr. 12, 1989, 54 F.R. 15159, as amended, set out as a note under section 7301 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

Delegation of Authority

Authority of the President under subsec. (b) of this section to grant exemptions or approvals to individuals delegated to agency heads, see section 401 of Ex. Ord. No. 12674, Apr. 12, 1989, 54 F.R. 15159, as amended, set out as a note under section 7301 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

Authority of the President under subsec. (b) of this section to grant exemptions or approvals for Presidential appointees to committees, commissions, boards, or similar groups established by the President, and for individuals appointed pursuant to sections 105 and 107 (a) of Title 3, The President, delegated to Counsel to the President, see section 402 of Ex. Ord. No. 12674, Apr. 12, 1989, 54 F.R. 15159, as amended, set out as a note under section 7301 of Title 5.

“Particular Matter” Defined

Pub. L. 100–446, title III, § 319, Sept. 27, 1988, 102 Stat. 1826, which provided that notwithstanding any other provision of law, for the purposes of this section “particular matter”, as applied to employees of the Department of the Interior and the Indian Health Service, means “particular matter involving specific parties”, was repealed by Pub. L. 101–194, title V, § 505(b), Nov. 30, 1989, 103 Stat. 1756, as amended by Pub. L. 101–280, § 6(c), May 4, 1990, 104 Stat. 160.

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Similar provisions were contained in Pub. L. 100–202, § 101(g) [title III, § 318], Dec. 22, 1987, 101 Stat. 1329–213, 1329–255.