

NAR Issue Summary

Business / Government Travel Rules

NAR Committee:

Business Issues Policy Committee

What is the fundamental issue?

In 2011, a scandal erupted surrounding a 2010 GSA employee conference in Las Vegas which cost the government over \$800,000, prompting the White House to issue Executive Order 13589, "Promoting Efficient Spending." This Order directed each agency to reduce its combined costs by at least 20% in FY 2013 from FY 2010 levels. Following the executive order, several bills were introduced in Congress which would not only have curbed government spending on employee travel, but would hamper the ability of government employees to attend conferences and meetings sponsored by non-governmental entities (such as NAR), thus hindering the flow of ideas and information between agencies and trade associations. The most severe of these restrictions did not pass into law, but it is still important to monitor the issue to ensure that there is a means for education and dialogue between government agencies and trade associations to assure well-informed policymaking occurs.

I am a real estate professional. What does this mean for my business?

As a member of the National Association of REALTORS[®], you count on NAR to advocate for your business on Capitol Hill. One of the ways which NAR accomplishes this is through meeting and exchanging ideas with staff members from Congressional and Regulatory offices at conferences and meetings. It is important to the policymaking process that NAR's members and staff continue to be able to meet with policymakers at such events, in order to best represent the interests of REALTORS[®].

NAR Policy:

NAR supports the intent of Congress to create more transparency and accountability in government spending, but has concerns that overly-restrictive language in bills may chill government employees' participation in non-governmental meetings and conferences. These meetings facilitate dialogue between government and the private sector which is essential to the development of informed policymaking.

Opposition Arguments:

Opponents of NAR policy believe that government spending on non-governmental



NAR Issue Summary

Business / Government Travel Rules

meetings and conferences should be strictly limited so as to use the least amount of the taxpayers' money, especially following the discovery of the wasteful abuses by the GSA and IRS.

Legislative/Regulatory Status/Outlook

In May 2013 the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued two Memos, *Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations* and *Agency Responsibilities for Implementation of Potential Joint Committee Sequestration*, which provide guidance for balancing government employee conference attendance to further an agency's mission while still reducing travel and conference spending during the government sequestration.

Current Legislation/Regulation (bill number or regulation)

[Read the Executive Order](#)

[Read the OMB Guidance](#)

Legislative Contact(s):

Christie DeSanctis, CDeSanctis@nar.realtor, 202-383-1102

Regulatory Contact(s):

Nia Duggins, nduggins@nar.realtor, 202-383-1085

