



Franking

Quick Reference

Definition of the Frank

The frank is the facsimile signature of a Senator in the corner of an envelope that takes the place of a stamp and authorizes sending official material through the domestic mail without prepayment of postage.

Authorized Users of the Frank

- Senators
- Senators-Elect (*for Senate-related duties*)
- Former Senators (*for 90 days to close the office*)
- Vice President
- Sergeant at Arms and Secretary of the Senate
- Senate Legal Counsel and Senate Legislative Counsel
- Surviving Senate spouses (*for 180 days after a Senator's death, a surviving spouse may send nonpolitical mail relating to the death of the Senator*)
- Senate committee under the frank of the chairman for official committee business only
- Democratic Caucus and Republican Conference

Franking Highlights

- The frank is to be used only for official Senate business.
- The frank may not be loaned to an outside group or organization. For example, an outside organization's pamphlet cannot be included in a franked mailing.
- The frank is not free postage. The costs associated with delivering franked mail are paid with taxpayer dollars out of an office's official funds.
- The frank may not be used to send materials outside the United States unless the address is an APO or FPO address.

Frankable Mail

- Matters of public concern and Congressional actions
- Official newsletters and press releases
- Questionnaires seeking public opinion
- Mail between DC and state office
- Mail to other Members of Congress and all other legislators
- Congratulations on a **public distinction** (*see reverse*)
- Federal regulations or federal publications containing general information
- Nonpartisan voter registration or election information
- Biographical material or pictures in federal publications or in direct response
- Whole or part of the Congressional Record
- Public service material (created with government appropriated funds)
- Responses to letters of condolence received from the public upon the death of a Senator's immediate family member



Franking

Quick Reference

Examples of Frankable Public Distinctions

- Recent naturalization as an American citizen
- Receipt of a high school diploma by a senior citizen through an adult education program
- Enlistment or re-enlistment in the Armed Forces or acceptance into a U.S. military service academy
- Becoming an Eagle Scout, a VFW Commander, or an American Legion Commander
- Being elected or appointed to public office
- Becoming a director of a state museum

Non-Frankable Mail

- Laudatory or complimentary to a Member on a personal rather than official basis
- Holiday greetings unless they are an incidental reference in otherwise frankable mail
- Senator's family activities other than in connection with official duties
- Solicitations for political support or financial assistance
- Personal mail
- Condolences sent to the public
- Congratulations on a **personal distinction**

Examples of Non-Frankable Personal Distinctions

- Birth, marriage, or anniversary
- Graduation from high school or college, or selection as class valedictorian
- Being in the top 10% of a graduating class
- Promotion in a business
- Establishing a new business
- Registering to vote
- Receiving an award from a local organization
- Mention in an article in a trade association journal or newspaper

PLEASE NOTE: Mail related to personal distinctions may be sent using officially-related funds. Letters of personal distinction are not rendered frankable when mailed in direct response.

Violations of the Frank

Each Senator is personally responsible for ensuring that the use of the frank complies with the law, Senate rules, and interpretive rulings of the Ethics Committee. Violation of the franking privilege may result in the Senator being held personally responsible for the cost of the mailing. If the office uses the frank for personal purposes, criminal fines are possible.