

COGEL NEWS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Freedom of Information	1
Campaign Finance	1
Elections	2
Ethics	2-3

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Recent News

- *Freedom of Information*

PENNSYLVANIA—An article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* describes privacy concerns related to the use of drone cameras by law enforcement agencies.

UNITED STATES—The *Project on Government Oversight* has posted an article describing a recent Department of Justice legal opinion concluding that the Department's Office of Inspector General does not have unfettered access to all of the agency's documents. The opinion appears inconsistent with the Inspector General Act, which grants each agency's Office of Inspector General with "access to all records" of the agency. This *Washington Examiner* article also discusses the DOJ opinion.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The *Washington Post* reports that the District of Columbia is implementing a new plan that would allow release of most police body camera footage.

- *Campaign Finance*

UNITED STATES—According to *Public Integrity*, Presidential super PACs have raised more than twice as much money for the 2016 election as the candidates themselves. [This report from the Brennan Center of Justice](#) is an in-depth analysis of the fundraising shift from candidates to outside groups set up to benefit specific candidates.

UNITED STATES—Also from *Public Integrity*, both political parties are capitalizing on a new law allowing them to raise more money from rich donors than ever before.

WISCONSIN—An article in the *LaCrosse Tribune* reports that Governor Scott Walker called for the dismantling of the state's Government Accountability Board, the independent state agency that oversees elections.

UNITED STATES—A *Governing* article questions whether campaigns should be rewarding volunteers with prepaid Visa cards.

If your agency, law firm, or organization is not a COGEL member, please consider joining. COGEL membership gives you immediate access to your professional counterparts throughout the U.S. and Canada, including an amazing annual conference, this year in Boston from December 6 through 9. [Get more information here.](#)

If there's action in your jurisdiction, and you want your COGEL colleagues to know about it, please send a link to [John Schaaf](#) or [Jennifer Hardin](#), who compile the COGEL News.

- *Elections*

UNITED STATES—This [article in *Journalists' Resource*](#) gathers links to a wide range of research on elections and campaign finance.

UNITED STATES—This [New York Times](#) opinion piece discusses continuing threats to the voting rights act.

CALIFORNIA—The [Sacramento Bee](#) reports that California's Secretary of State will not appeal a recent decision against the state, thereby guaranteeing the right to vote to thousands of convicted felons in California.

FLORIDA—This [Associated Press](#) article, picked up by WSTP in Tampa Bay, describes efforts by Florida's Legislature to redraw Florida's congressional districts. This article from [Governing](#) provides an analysis of how Florida's redistricting may affect the 2016 election.

KANSAS—The [Wichita Times](#) reports that the Kansas Secretary of State will begin, in September, prosecuting voter fraud cases focusing on double voting cases from the 2010 election.

KANSAS—The [Lawrence Journal-World](#) reports that four Kansas lawmakers oppose the Secretary of State's proposal to cancel voter registration applications after 90 days if the voters do not submit proof of citizenship or other required information.

OREGON—A [Los Angeles Times](#) article describes a new Oregon law under which all eligible voters are automatically registered to vote unless they opt out.

TEXAS—The [Texas Tribune](#) describes a recent US Circuit Court of Appeals decision that the Texas voter ID law has a discriminatory effect, in violation of federal law, but is not a poll tax. Also from the [Texas Tribune](#), an article describing a joint study by Rice University and the University of Texas on the effect Texas's strict voter identification requirements.

- *Ethics*

CANADA—An article in the [National Post](#) states that at the trial of Sen. Mike Duffy, there was testimony from Prime Minister Stephen Harper's onetime in-house lawyer, Ben Perrin. In his testimony, Perrin described how he heard that Harper's chief of staff was personally paying Duffy's \$90,000 expense tab.

OTTAWA—This [Ottawa Citizen](#) article reports that an Independent Senator led a business delegation to the Caribbean that may have advanced his own business interests because his business partner was a member of the delegation.



COGEL offers its thanks, on behalf of the membership, to State and Federal Communications for the many services it provides to COGEL. Included among those is “News You Can Use,” a valuable compilation of ethics and campaign finance news, which is made available to all COGEL members on the COGEL Web site.

- *Ethics (Continued)*

MICHIGAN—An article in the *Detroit News* reports on a screenplay-worthy plan by one Michigan State Representative to distribute a false email alleging he had sex with a male prostitute in order to conceal his relationship with another State Representative.

NEW JERSEY—*New Jersey Today* is reporting on concerns raised by The Government Accountability Office and the Inspector General for the Department of Interior that American coal companies are selling coal mined from public lands to affiliated companies at discount prices. The result is lower prices paid to the US Government.

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