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The New Jersey Postal History Society

Presents

A COMPILATION OF LEGISLATIVE “FREE” FRANK LEGISLATION

Compiled by Ed & Jean Siskin

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The following is a compilation of legislation relating to free franking of the mail,
compiled by

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A LISTING OF NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE "FREE" FRANKS

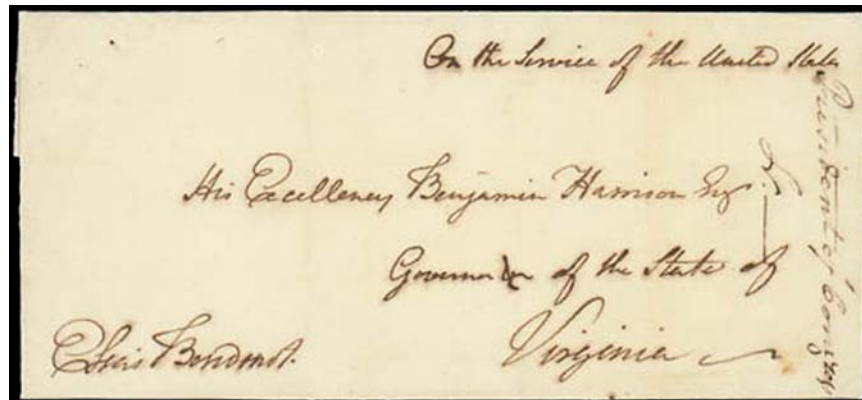
A checklist in two forms, the first in alphabetical order by name, and the second in
date order by years of service. Go to:

<http://www.njpostalhistory.org/media/pdf/njfreefranks.pdf>

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LEGISLATIVE FRANKING LAWS, Compiled By Ed & Jean Siskin

From article in November 2012 *NJPH*



Elias Boudinot's frank as "President of the United States," October 8, 1783.

For this article online, please visit www.NJPostalHistory.org and see our featured article for November 2012.

Table 1 ~ Laws & Regulations Regarding Legislator Franking Privileges

Effective November 8, 1775 - "That all letters to and from the delegates of the United Colonies, during the sessions of Congress, pass, and be carried free of postage, the members having engaged upon their honour not to frank or enclose any letters but their own."

Effective October 18, 1782 - Applied franking privileges under the Articles of Confederation and resolved "... that letters, packets, and despatches to and from the members and secretary of Congress, while actually attending Congress ... shall pass and be carried free of postage."

Effective April 23, 1787 - Applied the franking privilege to members of the Constitutional Convention

Effective June 1, 1792 - This law established the General Post Office under the new U.S. Constitution and specified "That the following letters and packets, and no other, shall be received and conveyed by post, free of postage, under such restrictions, as are hereinafter provided; that is to say: ... all letters and packets, not exceeding two ounces in weight, to or from any member of the Senate or House of Representatives, the Secretary of the Senate or Clerk of the House of Representatives, during their actual attendance in any session of Congress, and twenty days after such session."

Effective June 1, 1794 - "That the following letters and packets, and no other, shall be received and conveyed by post, free of postage, under such restrictions as are herein after provided; that is to say; all letters and packets, to or from the President or Vice President of the United States, and all letters and packets, not exceeding two ounces in weight, to or from any member of the Senate, or House of Representatives, the Secretary of the Senate or Clerk of the House of Representatives, during their actual attendance in any session of Congress, and twenty days after such session; ...

That if any person shall counterfeit the hand-writing of any other person, in order to evade the payment of postage, such person or persons so offending, and being thereof duly convicted, shall forfeit and pay, for every such offence, the sum of one hundred dollars"

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Effective April 30, 1810 - “And be further enacted, That letters and packets, to and from the following officers of the United States, shall be received and conveyed by post, free of postage ... each member of the Senate, and each member and delegate of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States; the secretary of the Senate and clerk of the House of Representatives, provided each letter or packet shall not exceed two ounces in weight, and during their actual attendance in any session of Congress, and twenty days after such session, and in case of excess of weight, that excess alone shall be paid for; ...”

Effective March 31, 1816 - “That letters and packets to and from any member of the Senate, or member or delegate of the House of Representatives of the United States, the secretary of the Senate, and clerk of the House of Representatives, shall be conveyed free of postage for thirty days previous to each session of Congress, and for thirty days after the termination thereof: *Provided always*, That no letter or packet shall exceed two ounces in weight, and in case of excess of weight, that excess alone shall be paid for.”

Effective December 19, 1821 - “... That the Members of Congress, the Delegates from Territories, the Secretary of the Senate, and the Clerk of the House of Representatives, be, and they are hereby, authorized to transmit, free of postage, to any post-office within the United States, or the Territories thereof any documents which have been, or may be, printed by order of either House.

Effective March 3, 1825 - “That letters and packets to and from the following officers of the United States, shall be received and conveyed by post, free of postage. ... each member of the Senate, and each member and delegate of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, the secretary of the Senate, and clerk of the House of Representatives, provided each letter or packet, (except documents printed by the order of either House of Congress,) shall not exceed two ounces in weight, and during their actual attendance in any session of Congress, and sixty days before and after such session; and in case of excess of weight, that excess alone shall be paid for.

That, if any person shall frank any letter or letters, other than those written by himself, or by his order, on the business of his office, he shall, on conviction thereof, pay a fine of ten dollars, and it shall be the especial duty of postmasters to prosecute for said offence: And if any person, having the right to receive his letters free of postage, shall receive, enclosed to him, any letter or packet addressed to a person not having that right, it shall be his duty to return the same to the post-office, marking thereon the place from whence it came, that it may be charged with postage. And if any person shall counterfeit the hand-writing or frank of any person, or cause the same to be done, in order to avoid the payment of postage, each person, so offending, shall pay for every such offence, five hundred dollars.”

Effective April 3, 1826 - “That the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States be and he is hereby, authorized to frank and to receive letters and packages by mail, free of postage.”

Effective March 2, 1833 - That so much of the twenty-seventh section of the act approved third of March, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-five, as restricts the franking privilege of members of Congress to the period of sixty days before and after each session, shall be, and the same is hereby repealed; and it shall be lawful for the said privilege to be exercised by each

Table 1 ~ Laws & Regulations Regarding Legislator Franking Privileges

member of Congress from the period of sixty days before he takes his seat in Congress, until the meeting of the next Congress, and that said privilege shall be extended to all members of the present Congress until the next session.

Effective July 1, 1845 - ... members of Congress and delegates from Territories, may receive letters, not exceeding two ounces in weight, free of post. age, during the recess of Congress, anything to the contrary in this act notwithstanding; and the same franking privilege which is granted by this act to the members of the two Houses of Congress, is hereby extended to the Vice President of the United States; ...

Effective March 1, 1847 - Former members were authorized to send and receive public documents, letters and packages under their frank until the first Monday of December following the expiration of their term of office.

Effective March 3, 1863 - Franking privileges for former members were withdrawn.

Effective June 8, 1872 - Franking privileges for former members were restored.

Effective July 1, 1873 - That the franking privilege be, and the same hereby is, abolished from and after the first day of July, anno Domini eighteen hundred and seventy-three, and that thenceforth all official correspondence, of whatever nature, and other mailable matter sent from or addressed to any officer of the government or person now authorized to frank such matter, shall be chargeable with the same rates of postage as may be lawfully imposed upon like matter sent by or addressed to other persons.

Effective March 3, 1875 -

SEC. 5. That from and after the passage of this act, the Congressional Record, or any part thereof, or speeches or reports therein contained, shall, under the frank of a member of Congress, or delegate, to be written by himself, be carried in the mail free of postage, under such regulations as the Postmaster-General may prescribe; and that public documents already printed, or ordered to be printed, for the use of either House of Congress may pass free through the mails upon the frank of any member, or delegate of the present Congress, written by himself, until the first day of December anno Domini eighteen hundred and seventy-five.

SEC. 7. That seeds transmitted by the Commissioner of Agriculture, or by any member of Congress or delegate receiving seeds for distribution from said Department, together with agricultural reports emanating from that Department, and so transmitted, shall, under such regulations as the Postmaster-General shall prescribe, pass through the mails free of charge. And the provisions of this section shall apply to ex-members of Congress and ex-delegates for the period of nine months after the expiration of their terms as members and delegates.

Effective March 3, 1891 - That the members and members elect of Congress, shall have the privilege of sending free through the mails, and under their frank, letters to any officer of the Government when addressed officially.

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Effective January 12, 1895 - The Vice-President, Senators, Representatives, and Delegates in Congress, the Secretary of the Senate, and Clerk of the House of Representatives may send and receive through the mail all public documents printed by order of Congress; and the name of the Vice-President, Senator, Representative, Delegate, Secretary of the Senate, and Clerk of the House shall be written thereon, with the proper designation of the office he holds; and the provisions of this section shall apply to each of the persons named therein until the first day of December following the expiration of their respective terms of office. ...

The Vice-President, members and members-elect of and Delegates and Delegates-elect to Congress shall have the privilege of sending free through the mails, and under their frank, any mail matter to any Government official or to any person, correspondence, not exceeding one ounce in weight, upon official or departmental business.

Effective April 28, 1904 - Franking weight limit raised to four ounces.

Effective June 26, 1906 - Congress prohibited the use of a frank by or for anyone not legally entitled to use it.

Effective 1961 - Franked mail could be sent to "Postal Patron" without a name or street address.

Effective 1962 - "Postal Patron" franking was prohibited, based on objections raised by the Senate.

Effective 1963 - Senate and House could handle "Postal Patron" mail as each body saw fit. This was the first time that Senate and House franking rules differed.

Effective 1973 to Present - Many different changes were issued both to minimize the use of franking for political purposes and to reduce cost.

For a list of New Jersey Legislative "free" franks, please visit:

www.NJPostalHistory.org/media/pdf/njfreefranks.pdf