

MEDIA MENTION

Wiley Rein's Michael Toner Discusses the Growing Use of Leadership PACs

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Michael E. Toner, co-chair of Wiley Rein's Election Law & Government Ethics Practice, was quoted in yesterday's article in the *National Journal* about the proliferation of leadership political action committees (PACs) in Congress.

Leadership PACs are a fundraising tool that allows lawmakers to raise funds from supporters separate and apart from the funds that are raised for their campaign accounts. While Federal Election Commission (FEC) regulations do not allow money in a lawmaker's leadership PACs to be used to subsidize the lawmaker's own campaign committee, they do allow U.S. House Members and U.S. Senators to raise funds that can be contributed to the re-election campaigns of their colleagues and to other federal political committees and these contributions can be very helpful politically to the lawmaker.

Because of that sort of flexibility, leadership PACs are now virtually ubiquitous on Capitol Hill. The *National Journal* reports that 94 Senators have created one, as have two-thirds of U.S. House Members. "They're becoming so prevalent now, they're really a misnomer," said Mr. Toner, a former chairman of the FEC. "You don't need to be a leader in any sense of the word."

One major benefit of a leadership PAC is that it gives lawmakers another avenue to collect money from donors. Under federal election law, a donor can contribute a maximum of \$5,200 to a lawmaker's reelection campaign, and then can give an additional \$5,000 per year to the same lawmaker's leadership PAC.

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"The one thing I think we can all agree on: If there were shared-contribution limits, there wouldn't be nearly as many leadership PACs," said Mr. Toner. "That's just the reality."