

US Postal Laws & Regulations

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Franking privilege

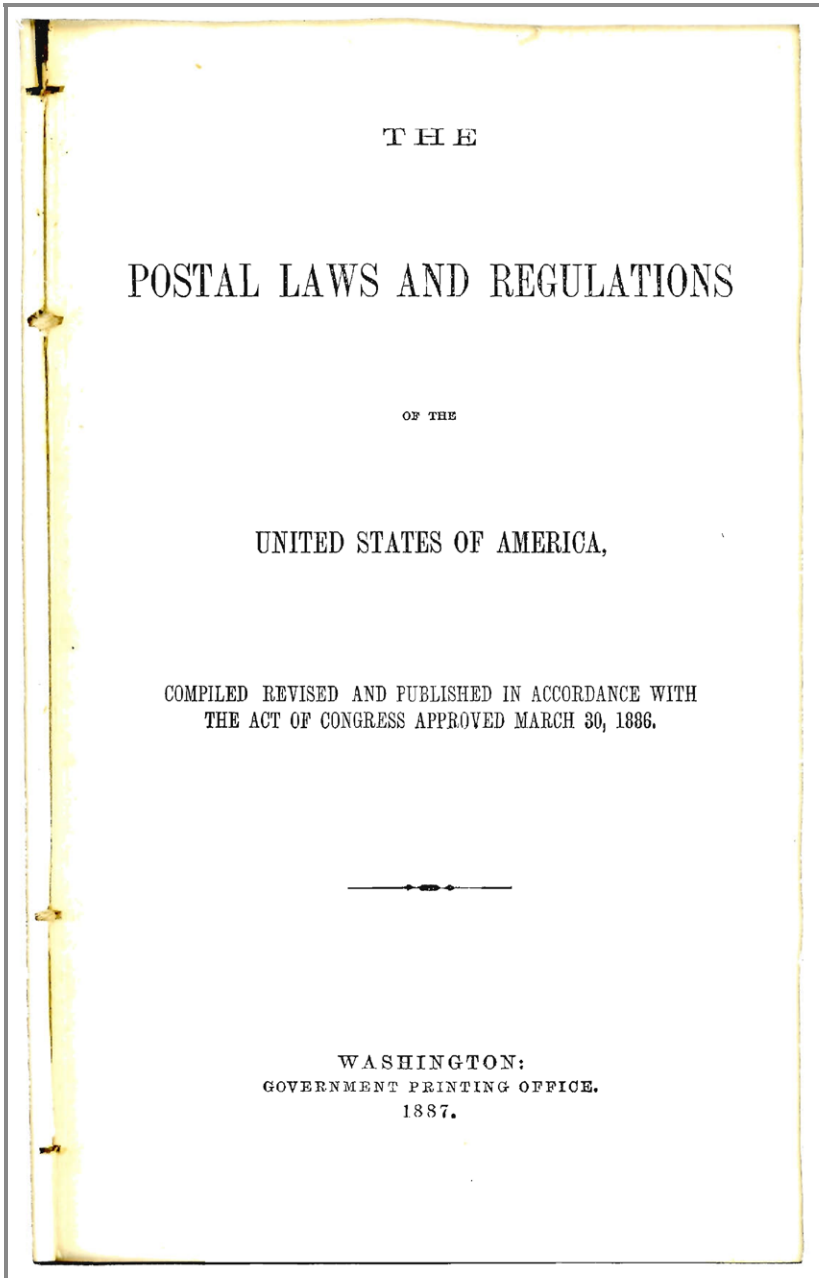


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this act the Congressional Record, or any part thereof, or speeches or reports therein contained, shall, under the frank of a member of Congress, or Delegate, to be written by himself, be carried in the mail free of postage, under such regulations as the Postmaster-General may prescribe. (Act of March 3, 1875, part of § 5; 18 Stats., 343.)

Sec. 411. Seeds and Agricultural Reports.—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. (Act of March 3, 1875, § 7; 18 Stats., 343).

Sec. 412. Special Grants of Franking Privilege.—All mail matter carried to the following-named persons, or sent by them under their respective written autograph signatures, will, in pursuance of the acts respectively referred to, be conveyed free of postage during their respective natural lives, namely:

Sarah Polk, widow of the late President James K. Polk, by an act of January 10, 1850; 9 Stats., 421.

Lucretia R. Garfield, by act of December 20, 1881 (22 Stats., 1).

Julia D. Grant, widow of the late President Ulysses S. Grant, by act of June 28, 1886 (24 Stats., —.)

No signature or mark is necessary to the free carriage of mail matter to either of the above-named persons. The address is sufficient.

Sec. 413. Regulations of Franking Privilege.—No matter can be transported under the franking privilege unless admissible to the mails under the provisions of chapter eleven. To entitle to free carriage the word "free" should be printed or written and signed with the name and official designation, if any, of the person entitled to frank it, on the address face of the package, except in case of matter addressed to the persons named in the preceding sections. In the case of the Congressional Record the name of the Senator, member, or Delegate must be written by himself; in other cases the name may be written by any one duly deputed by him for that purpose. A Senator, member, or Delegate who holds his certificate of election is entitled to the franking privilege from the commencement of his term.

All franked matter may be forwarded like any other, but such matter, when once delivered to the addressee, cannot be remailed unless properly franked again. A bulk package of franked articles may be sent

to one addressee, who, on receiving and opening the package, may place addresses on the franked articles and remail them for carriage and delivery to the respective addresses.

Sec. 414. Census Matter.—That the Superintendent [of Census], his chief clerk, supervisors, and enumerators are hereby authorized to transmit through the post-office any paper or document relating to the census, by writing thereon “Official Business, Census,” and subscribing the same, with the addition to his name of his official title. But this privilege shall extend to nothing but documents and papers relating to the census, which shall pass free. And any Superintendent, supervisor, enumerator, or clerk, who shall use or exercise this privilege for any other purpose other than the legitimate discharge of the duties of his office, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction, shall forfeit for each offense a sum not exceeding one hundred dollars. (Act of March 3, 1879, § 16; 20 Stats., 477.)

That all mail matter of whatever class relative to the census and addressed to the Census Office, to the Superintendent, his chief clerk, supervisors, or enumerators, and indorsed, “Official Business, Department of the Interior, Census Office,” shall be transported free of postage; and if any person shall make use of any such indorsement to avoid the payment of postage on his private letter, package, or other matter in the mail, the person so offending shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and subject to a fine of three hundred dollars, to be prosecuted in any court of competent jurisdiction. (Act of April 20, 1880, § 1; 21 Stats., 75.)

OFFICIAL MATTER.

Sec. 415. Official or Penalty Envelopes.—That it shall be lawful to transmit through the mail, free of postage, any letters, packages, or other matters relating exclusively to the business of the Government of the United States: *Provided*, That every such letter or package to entitle it to pass free shall bear over the words “Official Business,” an indorsement showing also the name of the Department, and if from a Bureau or office, the names of the Department and Bureau or office, as the case may be, whence transmitted. And if any person shall make use of any such official envelope to avoid the payment of postage on his private letter, package, or other matter in the mail, the person so offending shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine of three hundred dollars, to be prosecuted in any court of competent jurisdiction. (Act of March 3, 1877, § 5; 19 Stats., 335.)

That for the purpose of carrying this act into effect, it shall be the duty of each of the Executive Departments of the United States to