



## Banning Lobbying and Safeguarding Trust Act (BLAST ACT)

### Bill Overview

The BLAST Act would amend federal post-employment ethics law to impose a lifetime prohibition on lobbying by former Members of Congress and elected officers of the House and Senate. The legislation applies prospectively to individuals who leave office after enactment.

The bill prohibits two categories of activity:

1. **Registration:** First, it bars former Members and elected officers from working as registered lobbyists, as defined by the Lobbying Disclosure Act. Therefore, any activity that would require a former Member or elected officer to register under the Lobbying Disclosure Act would effectively be prohibited.
  - a. **Note:** Because the Lobbying Disclosure Act covers lobbying of both Congress and senior executive branch officials, this provision would prohibit former Members from engaging in lobbying that would trigger the requirement to register under the Lobbying Disclosure Act, including lobbying of the executive branch.
2. **Conduct:** Second, it prohibits them from making lobbying contacts, regardless of their registration status. This includes making communications or appearances before Members of Congress, congressional staff, or legislative offices with the intent to influence official action on behalf of private parties.

### Enforcement

These provisions will be enforced under the current punishments laid out in Section 216, which would not be changed by this bill. These include:

- Engagement in prohibited conduct laid out above is punishable for not more than one (1) year in prison.
- Willful engagement in prohibited conduct laid out above is punishable for not more than five (5) years in prison.
- The Attorney General may bring civil action and the person may be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$50,000 for each violation or the amount of compensation they received for the prohibited conduct – whichever is greater.

### Background Information

Currently, former Members are subject to temporary “cooling-off” periods—one year for Representatives and two years for Senators—during which lobbying Congress is restricted. The BLAST Act replaces these limits with a permanent ban. This is a modified version of what Sen. Rick Scott led with Sen. Braun in the [118<sup>th</sup> Congress](#).