

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4966

To prohibit Federal judges from receiving certain gifts, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 14, 2026

Mr. LUJÁN (for himself, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. SCHIFF) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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## A BILL

To prohibit Federal judges from receiving certain gifts, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “High Court Gift Ban  
5       Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON GIFTS.**

7       (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter V of chapter 73 of  
8       title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the  
9       end the following:

1 **“§ 7354. Gifts to Federal judges**

2 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

3 “(1) GIFT.—The term ‘gift’ means any gra-  
 4 tuity, favor, discount, entertainment, hospitality,  
 5 loan, forbearance, or other item having monetary  
 6 value (including services, transportation, local travel,  
 7 lodgings, and meals) whether provided in-kind, by  
 8 purchase of a ticket, payment in advance, or reim-  
 9 bursement after the expense has been incurred.

10 “(2) JUDICIAL OFFICER; RELATIVE.—The  
 11 terms ‘judicial officer’ and ‘relative’ have the mean-  
 12 ings given the term in section 13101.

13 “(3) PERSONAL HOSPITALITY FROM AN INDI-  
 14 VIDUAL.—The term ‘personal hospitality from an in-  
 15 dividual’ means hospitality extended—

16 “(A) by an individual for a nonbusiness  
 17 purpose;

18 “(B) at the personal residence, property,  
 19 or facilities owned by the individual or the fam-  
 20 ily of the individual;

21 “(C) without payment or reimbursement  
 22 from any other person (except the judicial offi-  
 23 cer or a relative of the judicial officer) for such  
 24 hospitality; and

1           “(D) with the individual or the family of  
 2           the individual present on the property at the  
 3           time in which a judicial officer is being hosted.

4           “(4) PROHIBITED SOURCE.—The term ‘prohib-  
 5           ited source’ means any person—

6           “(A) who has, or is likely to, come before  
 7           the judicial officer; or

8           “(B) whose interests have, or are likely to,  
 9           come before the judicial officer.

10          “(b) PROHIBITION.—

11          “(1) IN GENERAL.—A judicial officer may not  
 12          accept a gift from any source unless—

13          “(A) the judicial officer reasonably and in  
 14          good faith believes the gift has a value of less  
 15          than \$50; and

16          “(B) the aggregate value of gifts the judi-  
 17          cial officer has received from the source in that  
 18          calendar year is \$100 or less, including the  
 19          value of the gift.

20          “(2) EXCEPTIONS.—The prohibition under  
 21          paragraph (1) does not apply to any of the following  
 22          circumstances:

23          “(A) Anything for which the judicial offi-  
 24          cer pays the fair market value.

1 “(B) Anything for which the judicial offi-  
2 cer does not use and promptly returns to the  
3 person who provided the gift to the judicial offi-  
4 cer.

5 “(C) A gift from a relative.

6 “(D) A gift from another judicial officer.

7 “(E) Honorary degrees (and associated  
8 travel, food, refreshments, and entertainment)  
9 and other bona fide, nonmonetary awards pre-  
10 sented in recognition of public service (and as-  
11 sociated food, refreshments, and entertainment  
12 provided in the presentation of such degrees  
13 and awards) paid for by an educational institu-  
14 tion if the educational institution pays for, or  
15 sponsors, the award and invites the judicial offi-  
16 cer.

17 “(F) Opportunities and benefits that are—

18 “(i) available to the public or to a  
19 class consisting of all employees;

20 “(ii) offered to members of a group or  
21 class for which membership in such group  
22 or class is unrelated to service as a judicial  
23 officer;

24 “(iii) offered to members of an orga-  
25 nization open to all judicial officers;

1 “(iv) in the form of loans from banks  
2 and other financial institutions on terms  
3 generally available to the public; or

4 “(v) in the form of a reduction in  
5 membership fees or fees for participation  
6 in activities of an organization if such re-  
7 duction is offered to all employees and the  
8 organization is a professional organization  
9 in which its membership is solely contin-  
10 gent on professional qualifications of the  
11 prospective member.

12 “(G) Reimbursement for reasonable ex-  
13 penses for transportation, food, lodging, and en-  
14 tertainment at a seminar or event relating to  
15 the law, the legal system, or the administration  
16 of justice if—

17 “(i) the judicial officer was not invited  
18 to the seminar or event by a prohibited  
19 source;

20 “(ii) the seminar or event is not orga-  
21 nized, paid for, or sponsored by a prohib-  
22 ited source; and

23 “(iii) the total amount of reimburse-  
24 ment for the seminar or event is—

25 “(I) \$2,000 or less; or

1                   “(II) greater than \$2,000 if such  
2                   judicial officer received a written  
3                   waiver from—

4                   “(aa) in the case of a justice  
5                   of the Supreme Court of the  
6                   United States, the Chief Justice  
7                   of the United States; and

8                   “(bb) in the case of a judge,  
9                   the chief judge of the circuit or  
10                  district of the judge.

11                  “(H) Personal hospitality from an indi-  
12                  vidual, who is not a prohibited source, in an  
13                  amount that does not exceed the dollar amount  
14                  established under paragraph (1) of section  
15                  2503(b)(as adjusted under paragraph (2) of  
16                  such section) of the Internal Revenue Code of  
17                  1986 (26 U.S.C. 2503(b)) with respect to such  
18                  calendar year.

19                  “(3) GIFTS TO RELATIVES.—A gift to a relative  
20                  of the judicial officer shall be considered a gift to  
21                  the judicial officer if—

22                  “(A) it is given with the knowledge and ac-  
23                  quiescence of the judicial officer; and

1           “(B) the judicial officer has reason to be-  
2           lieve the gift was given because of the official  
3           position of the judicial officer.

4           “(c) ENFORCEMENT.—

5           “(1) REFERRAL.—

6           “(A) ATTORNEY GENERAL.—The Judicial  
7           Conference of the United States, or any official  
8           designated by the Supreme Court of the United  
9           States or Congress to assist the justices of the  
10          Supreme Court in maintaining compliance with  
11          the Code of Conduct for Justices of the Su-  
12          preme Court of the United States issued by the  
13          Court on November 13, 2023, or any successor  
14          rules or regulations governing ethical or con-  
15          duct standards for justices, shall refer to the  
16          Attorney General the name of any individual  
17          who the Conference or the official has reason-  
18          able cause to believe has accepted a gift prohib-  
19          ited by this section or any other law or regula-  
20          tion.

21          “(B) NOTIFICATION OF REFERRAL.—

22          Whenever the Judicial Conference of the United  
23          States refers a judicial officer to the Attorney  
24          General under this subsection, the Conference

1           shall notify the judicial council of the circuit in  
2           which such referred judicial officer serves.

3           “(2) PENALTIES.—

4                   “(A) CIVIL PENALTIES.—The Attorney  
5           General may bring a civil action in any appro-  
6           priate United States district court for a viola-  
7           tion of this section. The court in which such ac-  
8           tion is brought may assess against such indi-  
9           vidual a civil penalty in any amount, not to ex-  
10          ceed \$50,000.

11                   “(B) CRIMINAL PENALTIES.—Any person  
12          who knowingly and willfully violates this section  
13          shall be fined under title 18, imprisoned for not  
14          more than 1 year, or both.

15          “(d) IMPLEMENTATION.—Within 180 days of the en-  
16          actment of the High Court Gift Ban Act, the Supreme  
17          Court of the United States and the Judicial Conference  
18          of the United States shall each promulgate regulations to  
19          carry out this section and ensure compliance.

20          “(e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-  
21          tion shall be construed to make it permissible for a judicial  
22          officer to accept a gift or other item of value that the judi-  
23          cial officer is prohibited from accepting under any other  
24          law, rule, or regulation.”.

- 1       (b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—  
2 The table of sections for subchapter V of Chapter 73 of  
3 title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the  
4 end the following:

“7354. Gifts to Federal judges.”.

