Ethics Answers

Q: The alumni club of the ambassador's alma mater has asked if the ambassador would host the club's annual board meeting at the chief of mission residence (CMR). The ambassador is a longstanding member of the club and would like to host the meeting. Is that acceptable?

A: In determining whether the ambassador may co-host an event at the CMR that benefits a private group, the post should consider whether there is a foreign policy purpose for co-hosting the event, whether undue preference is being shown the private group and whether co-hosting the event creates a real or apparent conflict of interest for the Department or the ambassador. Further, the post would need to ensure that the use of any promotional materials is appropriate, that any fundraising has been authorized and that post retains control of the guest list. Here, it does not appear there is any foreign policy purpose, and the concern regarding undue preference is considerable, given that the ambassador has a strong personal connection to the club. Thus, based on this information, the event should not be hosted at the CMR.

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