

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Mary W. Jackson Building NASA Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



December 8, 2023

Reply to Attn of: General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution

FROM: Agency Counsel for Ethics

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA Employees at the Aero Club 75th Annual Wright Brothers Memorial Dinner on December 15, 2023

On December 15, 2023, the Aero Club, a nonprofit organization under section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code, will host an awards dinner at the Downtown Westin Washington Hotel, 999 9th St., NW, Washington, DC, 20001, starting at 6:30 p.m. The Aero Club is in control of the organizing, planning and sending of invitations to this event. The event honors the National Aeronautics Association's Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy recipient Captain Robert Crippen for "... his significant public service of enduring value to aviation in the United States."

Approximately over 2000 people are expected to attend this event. Attendees will have a diversity of views or interests and will include personnel from other federal agencies, representatives of the U.S. legislative branch, state and local officials, representatives from the media, academia, industry, and international partner organizations. The estimated value of the dinner, including all food and drinks, is approximately \$285 per person. Attendance at this event will allow NASA attendees to exchange information regarding various NASA programs with attendees from other organizations. I find that these event meets the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 C.F.R. §2635.204(g). I further determine that there is an Agency interest in having NASA personnel attend these events because it will provide an opportunity for the invited persons to exchange ideas and views pertaining to NASA's policies, programs, and operations.

NASA employees — including NASA employees in non-career positions who are required to sign the ethics pledge under Executive Order 13989 — who do not have a significant role in a matter affecting the interests of the Aero Club may accept an invitation for free attendance for themselves and a guest to the event. In those circumstances, I find that the Agency's interest in attendance outweighs any concern that the individual may be, or may appear to be, improperly influenced in the performance of their duties.

However, NASA employees whose duties have a significant role in any matter affecting the interests of the Aero Club, such as procurement duties, program management, or negotiating a

Space Act Agreement should seek a separate determination from their local ethics counselor as to whether they may accept the invitation for free attendance.

Adam F. Greenstone