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**DECISION**



*C. Rogers*  
**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES**  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

**FILE: B-173239**

**DATE: June 15, 1978**

**MATTER OF: Printing of "With the Compliments of" Cards for  
Government Officers**

**DIGEST:** Use of printed cards to accompany annual report of Board for International Broadcasting was illegal under 44 U.S.C. § 1106 (1970), which expressly prohibits sending a report "with 'the compliments' of an officer of the Government," and thus the expense of printing such cards may not be certified for payment.

The Director of Administration, General Services Administration (GSA), requests our decision concerning the propriety of certifying for payment a voucher for \$111 in printing costs submitted by the Board for International Broadcasting.

The voucher and accompanying exhibits describe the printing job as 1500 business cards, 500 each for the Chairman, Executive Director, and Director of Engineering of the Board. Relying on our longstanding rule that business cards are a personal expense and thus not chargeable to the Government, 41 Comp. Gen. 529 (1962), the GSA certifying officer refused to certify the expenditure for payment.

The Chairman of the Board for International Broadcasting then wrote to GSA protesting the nonpayment and informing it that the expenditure was not, in fact, for business cards, but for transmittal slips to accompany the Board's Annual Report "in lieu of printing and sending letters to accompany each report." The text of the cards for the Executive Director reads: "With the compliments of Walter R. Roberts/Executive Director/Board for International Broadcasting." The same wording, "with the compliments of," is used on the cards for the Chairman and the Director of Engineering.


It is not necessary to decide whether the cards are a personal expense in the nature of calling cards, although certainly they appear similar in form and function to calling cards. Under 44 U.S.C. § 1106 (1970),

"[a] report, document, or publication distributed by or from an executive department or independent agency or establishment of the Government may not contain a notice that it is sent with 'the compliments' of

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an officer of the Government, or with a special notice that it is so sent, except that notice that it has been sent, with a request for an acknowledgement of its receipt, may be given."

Since the use of these cards in the manner described by the Board as transmittal slips, was illegal, the expense of their printing may not be certified for payment.

  
Acting Comptroller General  
of the United States