
State Government Committee

HB 1914

Brief Description: Addressing the reporting of gifts in the form of food and beverage to state officers and state employees.

Sponsors: Representatives Orwall, Hansen and Ormsby; by request of Legislative Ethics Board.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires legislators to provide a list of each occasion at which food and beverages were accepted, regardless of price, in their personal financial affairs report.
- Requires lobbyists to include food and beverages provided to legislators, regardless of cost, on their monthly lobbying reports.

Hearing Date: 2/12/15

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Ethics in Public Service Act.

The Ethics in Public Service Act (Act) was established in statute in 1994 and applies to all branches of government. Under the Act, state officers and employees are prohibited from accepting or seeking anything of economic value if it could be reasonably expected that the gift would influence the vote, action, or judgment of the officer or employee, or be considered as part of a reward for action or inaction.

The Act allows state officers and employees to accept certain gifts valued at \$50 or less. However, some items are presumed not to influence and may be accepted regardless of the cost, such as flowers, advertising or promotional items of nominal value, or food and beverages consumed at hosted receptions where attendance is related to one's duty. A state officer or employee also may accept food and beverage in the ordinary course of meals on infrequent occasions where attendance is related to the officer's or employee's official duty.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Reporting under Campaign Disclosure and Contributions Laws.

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) was created and empowered by an initiative of the people to provide timely and meaningful public access to information about the financing of political campaigns, lobbyist expenditures, and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates. The PDC also ensures compliance with contribution limits and other campaign finance restrictions.

Lobbyists are required to register with the PDC and report lobbying activities on a monthly basis. Information that must be reported includes such things as the expenditures for lobbying activities, contributions made to candidates and political committees supporting or opposing ballot measures, subject matters being lobbied, and a listing of each payment made in the form of food and beverage in excess of \$50 to a state official or employee.

Public officials required to submit personal financial affairs reports must include a list of each occasion at which food and beverage in excess of \$50 was accepted.

Summary of Bill:

Legislators must provide a list of each occasion at which food and beverage in the ordinary course of meals was accepted, regardless of cost, on his or her personal financial affairs report. Lobbyists must include payments in the form of food and beverage provided to legislators, regardless of cost, on their monthly lobbying reports.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.