



“The people of Hawaii believe that public officers and employees must exhibit the highest standards of ethical conduct and that these standards come from the personal integrity of each individual in government.”

- Hawaii State Constitution, Art. XIV

The High Road

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State Ethics Commission Advocates For Ethics and Lobbying Bills in 2016

The State Ethics Commission will continue to advocate for legislation to clarify and strengthen Hawaii’s ethics and lobbying laws. Here is a summary of the Commission’s legislative package for 2015 - 2016:

- Require mandatory ethics training for all state employees who file public financial disclosure statements (SB No. 446/HB No. 183, Relating to Mandatory Ethics Training)
- Prohibit a legislator or state employee from appointing or hiring a relative to public office or employment (SB No. 450/HB No. 187, Relating to Nepotism)
- Expand the conflicts of interests law by prohibiting a state employee from taking official action affecting businesses in which close family members hold financial interests (SB No. 451/HB No. 188, Relating to Conflicts of Interests)
- Allow the Commission more time in which to respond to a request for an advisory opinion upon good cause (SB No. 447/HB No. 184,

Relating to Advisory Opinions by the State Ethics Commission)

- Clarify that the “fair treatment” section of the State Ethics Code does not prohibit legislators from taking action in the exercise of their legislative functions, and that task force members must file annual disclosures of financial interests that are public records

(SB No. 448/HB No. 185, Relating to the Ethics Code)

- Repeal certain exemptions for task force members

from the ethics laws; clarify the application of the “fair treatment” section of the State Ethics Code to legislators; and clarify that task force members must file annual disclosures of financial interests that are public records (SB No. 449/HB No. 186, Relating to the Ethics Code)

- Remove the requirement that a violation of the Lobbyists Law must be willful before penalties

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Next Public Meeting:
March. 17, 2016
10:00 am

REMINDER:
MARCH 31 IS
LOBBYIST FILING
DEADLINE

Lobbyists and organizations with a registered lobbyist must file Expenditure and Contribution Reports with the Commission on or before March 31, 2016, covering the period January 1, 2016 through February 29, 2016.



Commission Resolves Lobbying Investigations of Nonprofit Organization and Chief Executive Officer

The State Ethics Commission recently resolved an investigation of a nonprofit organization for failure to file lobbying expenditures reports with the Commission as required by the Lobbyists Law. The Commission also resolved an investigation of the organization's Chief Executive Officer for failure to register as a lobbyist and to file lobbying expenditures reports. As part of the resolution of the Commission's investigations, the

organization and the Chief Executive Officer agreed to: (1) pay administrative penalties of \$2,000 and \$500, respectively, to the State; (2) file the delinquent lobbying reports; and (3) issuance of a public document by the Commission describing the apparent violations of the Lobbyists Law. The public document, **Resolution of Investigations 2015-2**, is posted on the Commission's website.

General Ethics Training for State Employees

The State Ethics Commission has scheduled a general ethics training class for state employees on Tuesday, March 15, 2016, at the City and County of Honolulu's Mission Memorial Auditorium.

The class will cover the major sections of the State Ethics Code, including gifts and the gifts reporting law, misuse of a state employee's official position, conflicts of

interests, and post-employment restrictions applicable to employees after leaving state service. The class

will also cover the State Ethics Commission's role in administering and enforcing the State Ethics Code.

Employees are encouraged to register early as seating is limited. Registration is through the Commission's website at <http://ethics.hawaii.gov/2016-03-15stateemp/>.



Ethics and Lobbying Bills (cont'd from page 1)

may be assessed (SB No. 445/HB No. 182, Relating to Violations of the Lobbyists Law)

- Clarify the reporting requirements for lobbying during special sessions of the legislature (SB No. 443/HB No. 180, Relat-

ing to Lobbying Contributions and Expenditures Statements)

- Broaden the reporting requirements for lobbying expenditures by lobbyists and organizations that lobby (SB No. 444/HB No. 181, Relating to Lobbying Expenditures)