



# The High Road

*The High Road* is a publication of the Hawaii State Ethics Commission

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*“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*

## Hawaii State Ethics Commission

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## New Ethics and Lobbyists Laws Provide Stronger Penalties and Greater Clarity

On June 22, 2017, Governor Ige signed into law three bills that strengthen and clarify Hawaii’s ethics and lobbyists laws. The State Ethics Commission strongly advocated for the passage of all three bills, which were part of the Commission’s legislative package for 2017 and were introduced by Representative Scott Nishimoto.

Here are some of the important changes made by the new laws.

**Act 50 (HB 508, HD1, SD1, CD1).** Doubles the maximum administrative fine that the Commission may impose for violations of the State Ethics Code — from \$500 to \$1,000 per violation — and clarifies that the Commission may assess an administrative fine and/or require restitution in a settlement agreement with a respondent to resolve an ethics charge.

**Act 51 (HB 511, HD1, SD1, CD1).** Doubles the maximum administrative fine that the Commission may impose for violations of the Lobbyists Law, from \$500 to \$1,000 per violation; clarifies the statutory definitions of “expenditure,” “lobbying,” and “lobbyist”; excludes from the definition of “lobbying” the preparation of grant-in-aid applications by nonprofit organizations; allows a former employer of a lobbyist to file



*Chair Rey Grauly and Executive Director Dan Gluck look on as Governor Ige signs bills into law.*

a notice of termination with the Commission when the lobbyist fails to do so; clarifies the reporting requirements for lobbying activities during special sessions of the legislature; and requires that lobbyist registration statements be posted on the Commission’s website.

**Act 52 (HB 852, HD2, SD1, CD1).** Increases the administrative fines for state officials and candidates who fail to file financial disclosure statements when due; allows the Commission to use e-mail or first-class mail to notify state officials who fail to file financial disclosure statements when due; and allows the Commission to post on its website a list of all persons who have failed to file financial disclosure statements by the statutory deadline.

Commission Chair Rey Grauly explained, “The Commission applauds the Legislature and the Governor for their strong support of governmental ethics in this past legislative session. These bills send a clear message that the people of Hawaii – and their elected representatives – expect Hawaii’s public officials to act with the utmost integrity.”

**Hawaii State  
Ethics Commission**

**Commissioners:**

Reynaldo Grauly,  
Chair  
David O'Neal,  
Vice Chair  
Susan DeGuzman  
Melinda Wood  
Ruth Tschumy

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## A Quick Guide on Gifts

The State Ethics Commission has a new "Quick Guide on Gifts." The guide summarizes the ethics laws that apply to gifts that are offered to state officials and employees, and provides general guidelines on whether gifts can be accepted. Visit our website to review our new "Quick Guide on Gifts" at [https://ethics.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/quickguide\\_gifts.pdf](https://ethics.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/quickguide_gifts.pdf)

## Gifts Disclosure Statements Due June 30, 2017



June 30, 2017, is the filing deadline for state legislators, employees, and board and commission members to file gifts disclosure statements with the State Ethics Commission. You must file a gifts disclosure statement for gifts received between June 1, 2016 and June 1, 2017, if the following conditions are met:

- (1) You, your spouse, or your dependent child received from one source any gift or gifts that, singly or together, were valued over \$200; and
- (2) The source of the gift or gifts has interests that may be affected by official action that you take.

Examples of gifts that may have to be reported on a gifts disclosure statement include meals, admission to receptions and other special events, conference fees, and travel (airfare and hotel expenses). Remember, only gifts that meet the above conditions must be reported. Gifts disclosure statements are public records and are posted on the Commission's website.

Certain gifts are exempt from the gifts disclosure law, such as gifts from close relatives or gifts that are donated to charity without being claimed as a charitable contribution for tax purposes. If you have questions about whether a gift must be reported, please contact the State Ethics Commission's office for guidance.

Please note that you are only required to file a gifts disclosure statement if you received any gifts that must be reported.

Additional information about the gifts disclosure law, as well as gifts disclosure forms and instructions, are available on the Commission's website at [http://ethics.hawaii.gov/gifts\\_form/](http://ethics.hawaii.gov/gifts_form/).