



“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 Article XIV

Hawaii State Ethics Commission

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The High Road

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Hawaii State Ethics Commission Celebrates 50th Anniversary!

In January of 1968, Hawaii established the first state ethics commission in the United States. This year, the Hawaii State Ethics Commission celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Hawaii’s constitution reflects our state’s commitment to government ethics and to the belief “that public officers and employees must exhibit the highest standards of ethical conduct.” *State Constitution, Article XIV*. In furtherance of this, the constitution requires the adoption of a code of ethics for state officers and employees. This code of ethics is found in Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 84. The State Ethics Commission is responsible for administering the ethics code to promote ethical conduct and public confidence in state government.

Over the past fifty years, the Commission has provided ethics guidance to thousands of state officials, investigated and prosecuted violations of the ethics code, and administered financial disclosure laws that enhance transparency and accountability in state government. The Commission also has established a state-wide program to educate state officials about the ethics laws, and has advocated for the passage of laws to improve and strengthen Hawaii’s ethics code.

The citizens of Hawaii established a strong foundation for state government by making the ethics code a constitutional requirement and establishing the first state ethics commission in the country. In our 50th anniversary year, we extend our sincere appreciation to the many individuals and organizations – state legislators and employees, good government organizations, and private citizens and other advocates for ethics – who have supported the Commission and its work to promote ethics and integrity in state government.



Hawaii State Ethics Commission

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How Hawaii Established the State Ethics Commission

1967

Act 263 of the Fourth State Legislature establishes the State Ethics Commission and standards of conduct for state legislators and employees. The Act includes restrictions regarding the acceptance of gifts; use of confidential information acquired in the course of official duties; use of official position to obtain unwarranted privileges; conflicts of interests; and state contracts. Act 263 to take effect January 1, 1968.

1968

Act 263 takes effect. State Ethics Commission is charged with responsibility for administering the standards of conduct for state legislators and employees, set forth in Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 84. First five members of the Commission are named by Governor John A. Burns and sworn into office on January 4, 1968.

Constitutional Convention of 1968 amends State Constitution Article XIV to make it a constitutional requirement that the legislature and each political subdivision adopt a code of ethics applicable to appointed and elected officers and employees.

1978

Constitutional Convention of 1978 amends [Article XIV](#) to establish the State Ethics Commission within the constitution, and to strengthen, broaden, and protect the system of government ethics regulation in Hawaii.

Lobbyist Registration Reminder for 2018 Legislative Session



Under the Lobbyists Law, Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 97, anyone who is a "lobbyist" must register with the State Ethics Commission. The law defines a "lobbyist" as an individual who lobbies for pay and who:

receives or expects to receive \$1,000 or more in any calendar year for engaging in lobbying; or

lobbies for more than five hours in any month or more than ten hours in any calendar year; or

spends \$1,000 or more lobbying during any lobbying reporting period (January 1 - February 28; March 1 - April 30; and May 1 - December 31).

An individual who meets this definition of a "lobbyist" must file a lobbyist registration form with the State Ethics Commission within 10 days of becoming a lobbyist. The registration form is available through the Commission's website at http://ethics.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/LREG_FRM.pdf.

If you registered as a lobbyist in 2017 and will continue to lobby for the same organization(s) in 2018, you are not required to re-register as a lobbyist for this year. Your lobbyist registration is valid for both years of the legislative biennium (2017-2018). To confirm your registration status or to view a list of all registered lobbyists, check the Commission's website at <http://ethics.hawaii.gov/lobreg/>.

“The purpose of this chapter is to . . . establish an ethics commission which will . . . render advisory opinions and enforce the provisions of this law so that public confidence in public servants will be preserved.”

*Preamble,
Hawaii Revised
Statutes Chapter 84
(State Ethics Code)*

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New Law Excludes Preparation of Grant-In-Aid Applications from Requirements of Lobbyists Law

A new state law passed last year ([Act 51](#), Session Laws of Hawaii 2017) changed the application of the Lobbyists Law to nonprofit organizations that submit grant-in-aid (“GIA”) applications to the legislature. Under the new law, the preparation of GIA applications by nonprofit organizations is no longer considered “lobbying.” This means that employees of nonprofit organizations are not required to register as lobbyists for preparing and submitting GIA applications to the legislature.

The new law also allows employees of nonprofit organizations to lobby in support of GIA applications without having to register as lobbyists if:

they spend less than ten hours in any month lobbying on a GIA application,
and

they do not lobby on other matters aside from the GIA application.

If a nonprofit organization hires an outside lobbyist to lobby for the organization on its GIA application and if that individual meets the criteria for a “lobbyist,” she/he must register as a lobbyist with the State Ethics Commission.

Nonprofit organizations with questions about the new law and how it applies to their activities should contact the Commission’s office for guidance.



New Electronic Filing System for Financial Disclosures

The Hawaii State Ethics Commission has launched its new electronic filing system for financial disclosures. State officials who are required to file annual disclosures of financial interests with the Commission can now file their disclosures electronically and can better manage their filings. Officials also can use the new e-filing system to file gifts disclosures with the Commission. For more information, including step-by-step instructions on how to access and use our new e-filing system, go to the Commission’s website at <https://hawaiiethics.force.com/disclosures/s/>.

Filing Deadlines Reminder

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

January 31, 2018

- Financial Disclosure Statements for State Legislators
- Lobbying Expenditures and Contributions Reports for May 1 – December 31, 2017

April 2, 2018

- Lobbying Expenditures and Contributions Reports for January 1 – February 28, 2018