

Policy Alert

January 5, 2016

2016 Political Law Update

As we enter the new year, please note the following changes to state lobbying and gift laws effective January 1, 2016:

Connecticut: Lobbying registration in Connecticut is now triggered when an individual makes or agrees to make expenditures, or receives or agrees to receive compensation and/or reimbursement in the amount of \$3,000 or more in any calendar year. This is an increase of the previous threshold, which triggered registration at combined expenditures and compensation of \$2,000 in a calendar year.

Kansas: In Kansas, the registration threshold triggered by lobbying-related expenditures has increased from \$100 to \$1,000. The cost of registration has also increased for expenditure lobbyists. Lobbyists who anticipate spending more than \$1,000 on behalf of any one employer in a calendar year are now required to pay a \$425 registration fee, compared to \$65.

Nevada: The Nevada Legislature enacted SB 307, which created a similar definition for gift under the Nevada Lobbying Act and the Nevada Financial Disclosure Act. The new law establishes a definition for “educational or informational meeting, event or trip” and exempts these meetings, events and trips from the definition of gift. The law, as enacted, requires financial disclosure of such meetings, events and trips by lobbyists and the recipient legislators. SB 307 also includes a provision that prohibits lobbyists from giving gifts in any amount to state legislators, their immediate families and legislative staff at any time—regardless of whether or not the Legislature is in regular or special session.

New York: The Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) has put in place a Lobbying Amnesty and Compliance Program that will run from January 1, 2016 through June 30, 2016. JCOPE has designed the program for individuals and entities that have not previously registered; it applies to filings that should have been made between December 10, 2006 and the date on which amnesty is sought. The goal of the program is to bring nonfiling lobbyists and lobbyist clients into compliance and ultimately disclose their lobbying-related information.

Oregon: Oregon has amended its gift laws to exempt admission to a meeting held by an organization where the public official is there in his or her official capacity representing the state government, the local government or a special government body. The exception covers the cost of admission, food and beverages for the public official and his or her staff and immediate family accompanying the official to the meeting.

Texas: The Texas Legislature passed a bill that made changes to the lobbying registration threshold. While the compensation threshold of \$1,000 remains in effect, individuals who meet the threshold but

whose lobbying-related activities constitute no more than 5 percent or 26 hours of the person's compensated time in a calendar quarter are not required to register as a lobbyist.

Virginia: As of November 1, 2015, the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council has assumed all responsibility for lobbying disclosure filings. These filings were previously housed under the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Council will also require all filings to be made electronically with the December 15, 2016 disclosure reports.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this alert, lobbying registration in another jurisdiction or gift compliance, please contact:

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