



General Assembly

***Proposed Bill No. 1***

LCO No. 337

Referred to Committee on Government Administration and Elections

Introduced by:

SEN. WILLIAMS, 29th Dist.

***AN ACT CREATING THE OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS AND THE CITIZEN'S ETHICS ADVISORY BOARD.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 That sections 1-80 and 1-81 of the general statutes be repealed and  
2 the general statutes be amended to create the Office of State Ethics  
3 which shall be an independent state agency consisting of an Executive  
4 Director, general counsel and other staff hired by the Executive  
5 Director. Said Executive Director shall be appointed, for an open-  
6 ended term, by the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board, with the approval  
7 of the General Assembly. The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board shall  
8 consist of the following seven members: One member appointed by the  
9 president pro tempore of the Senate, one member appointed by the  
10 speaker of the House of Representatives, one member appointed by  
11 the minority leader of the Senate, one member appointed by the  
12 minority leader of the House of Representatives, two members  
13 appointed by the Governor, and one member appointed by the Chief  
14 Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court. No more than three

15 members of such board may be affiliated with any one political party.  
16 On an annual basis, the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board shall conduct  
17 a written evaluation of the Executive Director. The board may remove  
18 said director for good cause provided the board has first obtained  
19 appropriate legal counsel regarding such good cause determination.  
20 The Executive Director shall hire a general counsel and other staff. No  
21 one person may serve as both the Executive Director and the general  
22 counsel of the Office of State Ethics. The general counsel and staff shall  
23 receive yearly, written evaluations from the Executive Director. The  
24 Executive Director may remove the general counsel or other staff for  
25 good cause shown provided the director has first obtained appropriate  
26 legal counsel regarding such good cause determination. The general  
27 counsel and staff shall be responsible for: (1) Responding to inquiries  
28 and providing advice regarding the ethics laws, either verbally or  
29 through informal staff letters; (2) if requested by the inquirer, drafting  
30 formal declaratory rulings containing such advice, provided such  
31 declaratory ruling has been approved by a judge trial referee before its  
32 issuance; (3) receiving formal complaints from third parties or  
33 initiating such complaints; (4) investigating complaints and presenting  
34 them to a judge trial referee for a probable cause determination and a  
35 full hearing on the merits; (5) negotiating settlements that must be  
36 approved by a judge trial referee; (6) providing yearly training to all  
37 state employees regarding ethics laws; and (7) collecting lobbyist  
38 reports and statements of financial interest. The Citizen's Ethics  
39 Advisory Board shall have the following additional duties: (A)  
40 Deciding when an investigation should commence; (B) deciding when  
41 a formal complaint should be filed; (C) making legislative  
42 recommendations; (D) drafting regulations; (E) overseeing yearly  
43 ethics training of all state personnel, in consultation with the Executive  
44 Director; and (F) making recommendations as to public education  
45 regarding ethics. Once appointed, members of the Citizen's Ethics  
46 Advisory Board may not make political contributions to anyone  
47 subject to the State Ethics Code and must recuse themselves from any  
48 determinations concerning their appointing authority. The Chief Court

49 Administrator shall designate ten judge trial referees who will be made  
50 available to: (i) Preside over and rule at such final hearings on the  
51 merits; (ii) approve declaratory rulings drafted by staff; and (iii)  
52 approve settlements negotiated by staff. Each month, the Chief Court  
53 Administrator shall randomly select one of the ten designated judge  
54 trial referees to preside at an ethics docket on the third Monday of the  
55 month, at which time any such final hearings will be held and any  
56 settlement or declaratory ruling may be submitted by staff for  
57 approval by such judge trial referee. In the event there is no such  
58 business in a particular month, such ethics docket shall not be  
59 scheduled. Final hearing decisions by such judge trial referees may be  
60 appealed to the Superior Court pursuant to section 4-183 of the general  
61 statutes.

***Statement of Purpose:***

To replace the current State Ethics Commission with an Office of State Ethics and Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board.