



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS

RAISED BILL NO. 675 AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXTENSION OF LOBBYIST RESTRICTIONS TO CERTAIN STATE EMPLOYEES

Raised Bill No. 675 proposes to extend the Code of Ethics for Lobbyists to those state employees who advocate on behalf of their agencies or departments before the legislature and other administrative agencies of state government.

While the Office of State Ethics (OSE) supports the concept of bringing greater transparency to intra-governmental lobbying, the office opposes this bill as written because its expansion of the definition of the term "lobbyist" to certain state employees may create more problems than it solves.

The Codes of Ethics seek to provide a framework for the interaction of private and public interests in state government for two separate groups. The Code of Ethics for Public Officials regulates state employees and public officials to ensure that they are not using their state office or position for inappropriate personal financial gain. The Code of Ethics for Lobbyists sheds light upon and regulates private sector use of resources to influence governmental action.

Raised Bill No. 675 blurs the line between the two codes by imposing the restrictions of the Code of Ethics for Lobbyists onto state employees and public officials who are already regulated by the Code of Ethics for Public Officials as well as by various other statutes.

The proposed legislation would have significant undesirable consequences:

- If state employees will be required to register as lobbyists, state agencies will become client lobbyists subject to reporting requirements and may be fined by the OSE if not in compliance.
- State agencies, as client lobbyists, would be required to abide by the stricter gift limits to which lobbyists and state contractors are subjected, which would include items given to legislators. Any legislator who accepts an item over and above the gift limits from the agency will have violated the ethics code and is subject to a fine of up to \$10,000.
- State employees who do not necessarily lobby the legislature but instead lobby other administrative agencies would also be required to register as lobbyists.
- State employees who are also lobbyists would be banned from making political contributions under campaign finance law.
- State employees who are also lobbyists, as well as the agencies that employ them, would be required to file reports with the OSE, creating additional bureaucracy.

For further information please contact: Carol Carson, Executive Director, Office of State Ethics, or Barbara Housen, General Counsel, Office of State Ethics, at 860-566-4472; 860-566-3806 (fax).