



General Assembly

February Session, 2008

Raised Bill No. 333

LCO No. 1924

01924_____GAE

Referred to Committee on Government Administration and Elections

Introduced by:
(GAE)

AN ACT CONCERNING COMPREHENSIVE ETHICS REFORMS.

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a
2 Legislative Ethics Committee that shall review and adjudicate any
3 charges brought against a member of the House of Representatives or
4 the Senate pursuant to subsection (f) of this section for acts that violate
5 the Legislative Code of Conduct described in section 2 of this act.

6 (b) The six members of the Legislative Ethics Committee shall be
7 appointed as follows: (1) One by the president pro tempore of the
8 Senate; (2) one by the speaker of the House of Representatives; (3) one
9 jointly by the president pro tempore of the Senate and the speaker of
10 the House of Representatives who shall serve as cochair of the
11 committee; (4) one by the minority leader of the Senate; (5) one by the
12 minority leader of the House of Representatives; and (6) one jointly by
13 the minority leader of the Senate and the minority leader of the House
14 of Representatives who shall serve as cochair of the committee.
15 Members of the committee shall serve two year terms concurrent with
16 their term of office.

17 (c) A quorum of the committee shall be required to conduct any
18 business. Four members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.
19 The committee shall function without regard to recess periods or
20 adjournment.

21 (d) The powers and duties of the Legislative Ethics Committee shall
22 consist of the following: (1) Issuing written advisory opinions upon the
23 written request of any member of the Senate or House of
24 Representatives regarding the Legislative Code of Conduct described
25 in section 2 of this act; (2) receiving and referring complaints of any
26 alleged violation of the Legislative Code of Conduct by a member to
27 the Chief Court Administrator to enable a judge trial referee to
28 determine whether probable cause exists to believe that a violation of
29 such code has occurred; (3) investigating complaints of any alleged
30 violation of the Legislative Code of Conduct by a member if a judge
31 trial referee makes a determination that probable cause exists to
32 believe that a violation of such code has occurred; and (4) maintaining
33 a record of its proceedings in addition to copies of advisory opinions
34 issued by the committee in order to achieve consistency in
35 recommendations and the issuance of advisory opinions.

36 (e) Any member of the General Assembly may request, in writing,
37 an advisory opinion regarding the Legislative Code of Conduct
38 generally or its applicability to a real or hypothetical situation. Any
39 advisory opinion issued by the Legislative Ethics Committee shall be
40 made in writing and publicly available for review, provided any
41 request by a member for an advisory opinion shall remain confidential.
42 Any member who acts in good faith upon any advisory opinion issued
43 by the Legislative Ethics Committee concerning such member shall not
44 be subject to discipline by their respective chamber with regard to the
45 matters covered by such advisory opinion provided there was a full
46 disclosure to the committee of all facts necessary for issuance of the
47 advisory opinion.

48 (f) (1) A complaint may be filed with the Legislative Ethics

49 Committee by any member of the General Assembly. A complaint may
50 not allege a violation that occurred prior to the adoption of the
51 Legislative Code of Conduct.

52 (2) In order for a complaint to be valid, it shall: (A) Be in writing;
53 (B) state the name of the person filing the complaint; (C) state the name
54 of the member who is alleged to have committed a violation of the
55 Legislative Code of Conduct; (D) set forth allegations that, if true,
56 would constitute a violation of the Legislative Code of Conduct. Such
57 allegations shall be stated with sufficient clarity and detail to enable
58 the committee to make a finding; (E) state the date of the alleged
59 violation; (F) include a statement that the allegations are true to the
60 complainant's own knowledge or that the complainant believes them
61 to be true; and (G) be signed by the complainant under penalty of
62 perjury.

63 (3) If the complaint is deficient as to form, the complaint shall be
64 returned to the complainant with a statement that indicates the nature
65 of the deficiency. If a complaint, previously found to be deficient as to
66 form, is refilled with the committee in a valid form, the party charged
67 in the complaint shall be provided with a copy of the new complaint.
68 Any subsequent amendments to a complaint that are filed with the
69 committee shall also be served or personally delivered to the member
70 charged in the complaint. If the complaint is sufficient as to form, the
71 committee shall review the complaint to determine whether the
72 complaint states a charge that may be investigated by the committee.

73 (4) The committee shall promptly send a copy of a valid complaint
74 to the member alleged to have committed the violation, who shall
75 thereafter be designated as the respondent.

76 (5) If the committee determines that a complaint is not valid, the
77 complaint shall be dismissed and returned to the complainant with a
78 notice of dismissal stating the reason or reasons for the dismissal.

79 (g) (1) If the committee determines that a complaint is valid, the

80 committee shall request that the Chief Court Administrator appoint a
81 judge trial referee to review the allegations contained in the complaint
82 and determine whether there is probable cause to believe that a
83 violation of the Legislative Code of Conduct has occurred and whether
84 an evidentiary hearing on the complaint should be held by the
85 committee. Any such review and subsequent evidentiary hearing shall
86 be closed to the public. The records and other documents used in the
87 course of any such review or evidentiary hearing shall not be subject to
88 disclosure under chapter 14 of the general statutes, except if the
89 respondent requests such disclosure.

90 (2) During any review or hearing conducted pursuant to
91 subdivision (1) of this subsection, the respondent shall have the right
92 to appear and be heard and to offer any information that may tend to
93 disprove any such allegation. The respondent shall also have the right
94 to be represented by legal counsel and to examine and cross-examine
95 witnesses. Any finding of probable cause to believe the respondent is
96 in violation of any provision of the Legislative Code of Conduct shall
97 be made by a judge trial referee not later than thirty days after the
98 committee refers the complaint alleging a violation, except that such
99 thirty-day period shall not apply if the judge trial referee determines
100 that good cause exists for extending such limitation period.

101 (3) If a judge trial referee determines that probable cause exists to
102 believe that the respondent violated the Legislative Code of Conduct,
103 the committee shall initiate hearings to determine whether there has
104 been a violation of the Legislative Code of Conduct. Any such hearing
105 shall be initiated by the committee not later than thirty days after the
106 judge trial referee's determination of probable cause. The committee
107 may grant one fifteen-day extension for the starting date of such
108 hearing upon the mutual consent of the complainant and the
109 respondent. The final disposition of any violation that the committee
110 has found to have been established by clear and convincing evidence
111 shall be made not later than fourteen days after the conclusion of the
112 hearing on the complaint.

113 (4) The committee shall receive all admissible evidence, determine
114 any factual or legal issues presented during the hearing, and make
115 findings of fact based upon evidence received. Hearings shall be open
116 to public. The rules of evidence shall apply in any such hearing. before
117 the such committee.

118 (5) For an allegation to be proved, a majority of the committee must
119 vote that it is proved by clear and convincing evidence. The
120 cochairpersons of the committee shall dismiss each allegation that is
121 not proved by clear and convincing evidence. If a majority of the
122 committee votes that a count was not proved by clear and convincing
123 evidence, a motion to reconsider such vote may only be made by a
124 member of the committee who voted that the count was not proved by
125 clear and convincing evidence.

126 (6) Upon the conclusion of any such hearing, the committee shall
127 make a recommendation to the respective chamber as to what action it
128 deems appropriate and that such recommendation shall be one of the
129 following: Expulsion, censure, reprimand or no action. The
130 committee's final recommendation shall be in the form of a resolution
131 for approval or rejection by the respective chamber.

132 (h) (1) A member of the Legislative Ethics Committee shall be
133 disqualified from participating in any proceeding before the committee
134 involving a complaint against such member. If a complaint is filed
135 against a member, the appointing authority shall appoint another
136 member to serve in that member's place while the complaint is under
137 review. Any member of the committee who is found to have violated
138 the Legislative Code of Conduct shall be ineligible to serve again as a
139 member of the committee.

140 (2) A member of the committee may recuse himself or herself from
141 participating in any investigation of the conduct of a member upon
142 submission of a written statement that he or she cannot render an
143 impartial and unbiased decision in the matter.

144 (3) If a member of the committee is disqualified or recuses himself
145 or herself from participating in any committee proceeding, the
146 appointing authority shall appoint a replacement member during the
147 period of the original member's disqualification or recusal.

148 (i) Upon receipt of the committee's final recommendation, the
149 respective chamber shall: (1) Consider the recommendation of the
150 committee within fourteen days; and (2) by a majority vote of such
151 chamber, either accept, dismiss or alter such recommendation.

152 (j) If the committee recommends expulsion, acceptance of such
153 recommendation shall require a two-thirds vote of all members of the
154 respective chamber. Acceptance of a committee recommendation for
155 reprimand or censure shall require a majority vote of the members of
156 the respective chamber.

157 (k) For purposes of this section:

158 (1) "Reprimand" is normally the appropriate sanction when the
159 respondent commits a single, relatively minor act that causes a
160 reasonable person to conclude that (A) the respondent, in the
161 performance of his or her official duties, has afforded undue influence
162 to another person or was unduly influenced by another person, or (B)
163 the respondent is likely to act or fail to act, in his or her official duties,
164 as a result of the undue influence exercised by another person or
165 afforded to another person. Such punishment may include a denial of
166 privileges of office. The recommendation for a reprimand is a public
167 record.

168 (2) "Censure" is normally the appropriate sanction when the
169 respondent commits more serious or repeated acts that constitute a
170 legal or moral wrong. A member who is censured shall not serve in
171 any leadership position and shall not serve as the chairperson or
172 cochairperson of any standing or interim legislative committee for the
173 remainder of that member's pending term in office. The respondent
174 must be present in the chamber when the chamber considers and votes

175 on the resolution.

176 (3) "Expulsion" is for very serious breaches of legal or ethical
177 responsibilities of members that directly relate to their duties as
178 members of the General Assembly, and that impugn the integrity of
179 the General Assembly, reflect adversely on the General Assembly or
180 otherwise undermine public trust in the institution of the General
181 Assembly.

182 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) There is established a
183 Legislative Code of Conduct that consists of the following provisions:
184 Members of the General Assembly shall conduct themselves to justify
185 the confidence placed in them by the people and, by personal example
186 and admonition to colleagues, shall maintain the integrity and
187 responsibility of their office. In addition to the other rules of the
188 General Assembly, no member shall: (1) Engage in any conduct that
189 constitutes a legal wrong that materially impairs the ability of the
190 member to perform the duties of his or her office or substantially
191 impairs public confidence in the legislature. For purposes of this code,
192 "legal wrong" includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment,
193 repeated violations of the state penal code and discrimination
194 prohibited under chapter 814c of the general statutes; (2) engage in any
195 conduct that intentionally violates any provision of the code of ethics
196 for public officials as set forth in chapter 10 of the general statutes. For
197 purposes of this section, a member of the General Assembly is
198 presumed to have intentionally violated the code of ethics only after
199 such a determination by the Office of State Ethics; or (3) use or attempt
200 to use his or her official position to secure unwarranted privileges or
201 exemptions for himself or herself or others.

202 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than December 31,
203 2010, the Joint Committee on Legislative Management shall administer
204 mandatory training on the code of ethics for public officials as set forth
205 in chapter 10 of the general statutes and on the Legislative Code of
206 Conduct established in section 2 of this act to each member of the

207 General Assembly and their respective staff members.

208 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) A public official, as defined
209 in section 1-79 of the general statutes, is guilty of failure to report
210 bribery when the public official: (1) Witnesses what the public official
211 knows or reasonably should know is the promise, offer, conferring or
212 agreement to confer upon a public official any benefit as consideration
213 for such public official's decision, opinion, recommendation or vote as
214 a public official; and (2) does not, as soon as reasonably practicable,
215 report such crime to a law enforcement agency.

216 (b) Failure to report bribery is a class A misdemeanor.

217 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) As used in sections 5 to 7,
218 inclusive, of this act:

219 (1) "Public official" means public official, as defined in section 1-79
220 of the general statutes, a judge of any court either elected or appointed,
221 and any elected or appointed municipal official;

222 (2) "State or municipal employee" means state employee, as defined
223 in section 5-154 of the general statutes, and includes an employee of
224 any quasi-public agency, as defined in section 1-120 of the general
225 statutes, or any person, whether appointed or under contract, who
226 provides services for a city, town or other political subdivision of the
227 state for which a pension is provided; and

228 (3) "Crime related to state or municipal office" means any of the
229 following criminal offenses committed by a person while serving as a
230 public official or state or municipal employee:

231 (A) The committing, aiding or abetting of an embezzlement of
232 public funds from the state, a municipality or a quasi-public agency;

233 (B) The committing, aiding or abetting of any felonious theft from
234 the state, a municipality or a quasi-public agency;

235 (C) Bribery in connection with service as a public official or state or
236 municipal employee; or

237 (D) The committing of any felony by such person who, wilfully and
238 with the intent to defraud, realizes or obtains, or attempts to realize or
239 obtain, a profit, gain or advantage for himself or herself or for some
240 other person, through the use or attempted use of the power, rights,
241 privileges or duties of his or her position as a public official or state or
242 municipal employee.

243 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) (1) Notwithstanding any
244 provision of the general statutes, if any person is convicted or pleads
245 guilty or nolo contendere to any crime related to state or municipal
246 office in state or federal court, the Attorney General shall apply to the
247 Superior Court for an order to revoke or reduce the pension of any
248 kind to which such person is otherwise entitled under the general
249 statutes for service as a public official or state or municipal employee.

250 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this
251 subsection, if any state or municipal employee covered by a collective
252 bargaining agreement is convicted or pleads guilty or nolo contendere
253 to any crime related to state or municipal office, in either federal or
254 state court, and the court determines that such employee's pension
255 shall be revoked or reduced, the value of such reduction or revocation
256 shall not exceed the amount necessary to satisfy any fine, restitution or
257 other monetary order made by the court in addition to the amount
258 necessary to pay the cost of such employee's incarceration, as
259 determined pursuant to section 18-85a of the general statutes.

260 (b) In determining whether the pension shall be revoked or reduced,
261 the Superior Court shall consider and make findings on the following
262 factors:

263 (1) The severity of the crime related to state or municipal office for
264 which the person has been convicted or to which the person has pled
265 guilty or nolo contendere;

266 (2) The amount of monetary loss suffered by the state, a
267 municipality or a quasi-public agency or by any other person as a
268 result of the crime related to state or municipal office;

269 (3) The degree of public trust reposed in the person by virtue of the
270 person's position as a public official or state or municipal employee;

271 (4) If the crime related to state or municipal office was part of a
272 fraudulent scheme against the state or a municipality, the role of the
273 person in the fraudulent scheme against the state or a municipality;
274 and

275 (5) Any such other factors as, in the judgment of the Superior Court,
276 justice may require.

277 (c) If the court determines, or the Attorney General certifies, that a
278 public official or state or municipal employee, who was convicted or
279 pled guilty or nolo contendere to a crime related to state or municipal
280 office, voluntarily provided information to the Attorney General, the
281 Auditors of Public Accounts or any state, federal or local law
282 enforcement official concerning the commission of such crime related
283 to state or municipal office by another public official or state or
284 municipal employee, who had a greater degree of culpability for such
285 crime than the public official or state or municipal employee providing
286 such information, the court shall not reduce or revoke the pension of
287 such public official or state or municipal employee, provided such
288 public official or state or municipal employee voluntarily provided
289 such information prior to learning of a criminal investigation into such
290 crime related to state or municipal office.

291 (d) If the Superior Court determines that the pension of a person
292 should be reduced, it may, after taking into consideration the financial
293 needs and resources of any innocent spouse, dependents and
294 designated beneficiaries of the person, order that some or all of the
295 reduced pension be paid to any such innocent spouse, dependent or
296 beneficiary as justice may require.

297 (e) If the Superior Court determines that the pension of such person
298 should not be revoked or reduced, it shall order that the retirement or
299 other benefit or payment be made to such person.

300 Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Any person whose pension
301 is revoked pursuant to section 6 of this act shall be entitled to a return
302 of his or her contribution paid into the relevant pension fund, without
303 interest.

304 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section,
305 no payments in return of contributions shall be made or ordered
306 unless and until the Superior Court determines that the person whose
307 pension has been revoked pursuant to section 6 of this act has satisfied
308 in full any judgments or orders rendered by any court of competent
309 jurisdiction for the payment of restitution to the state or a municipality
310 for losses incurred as a result of the crime related to state or municipal
311 office. If the Superior Court determines that the person whose pension
312 has been revoked under section 6 of this act has failed to satisfy any
313 outstanding judgment or order of restitution rendered by any court of
314 competent jurisdiction, it may order that any funds otherwise due to
315 such person as a return of contribution, or any portion thereof, be paid
316 in satisfaction of the judgment or order.

317 (c) No provision of section 6 of this act or this section shall be
318 construed to prohibit or limit any payment made pursuant to a
319 qualified domestic relations order issued prior to any such conviction
320 or plea by: (1) Any public official or state or municipal employee who
321 is convicted or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to any crime related to
322 state or municipal office; or (2) any state or municipal agency
323 responsible for the administration of such payment on behalf of such
324 public official or state or municipal employee.

325 (d) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 6 of this act, no
326 pension shall be reduced or revoked if the Internal Revenue Service
327 determines that such reduction or revocation will negatively affect or
328 invalidate the status of the state's government retirement plans or a

329 municipality's government retirement plans under Section 401(a) of
330 the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding
331 internal revenue code of the United States, as from time to time
332 amended.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>from passage</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To implement certain ethics based reforms including to establish a Legislative Ethics Committee and Legislative Code of Ethics.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]