

CHAPTER 25
GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS
SUBCHAPTER 1
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

§1001. Statement of purpose

It is essential under the American system of representative government that the people have faith and confidence in the integrity of the election process and the members of the Legislature. In order to strengthen this faith and confidence that the election process reflects the will of the people and that each Legislator considers and casts that Legislator's vote on the enactment of laws according to the best interests of the public and that Legislator's constituents, there is created an independent commission on governmental ethics and election practices to guard against corruption or undue influencing of the election process and against acts or the appearance of misconduct by Legislators. [RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §17 (COR).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §17 (COR).

§1002. Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices

1. Membership.

[PL 2001, c. 470, §1 (AMD); MRSA T. 1 §1002, sub-§1, ¶F (RP).]

1-A. Membership. The Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices, established by Title 5, section 12004-G, subsection 33 and referred to in this chapter as the "commission," consists of 5 members appointed as follows.

A. By December 1, 2001 and as needed after that date, the Senate caucus leaders and House caucus leaders jointly shall establish and advertise a 30-day period to allow members of the public and groups and organizations to propose qualified individuals to be nominated for appointment to the commission. [PL 2019, c. 635, §1 (AMD).]

B. By January 1, 2002 and as needed after that date, the Senate caucus leaders and House caucus leaders each shall present a list of 3 qualified individuals to the Governor for appointment of 4 members to the commission. The Senate caucus leaders and House caucus leaders jointly shall present a list of 3 qualified individuals to the Governor for appointment of a 5th member to the commission. [PL 2019, c. 635, §1 (AMD).]

C. By March 15, 2002, the Governor shall appoint the members of the commission selecting one member from each of the lists of nominees presented in accordance with paragraph A. These nominees are subject to review by the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over legal affairs and confirmation by the Legislature. No more than 2 commission members may be enrolled in the same party. [PL 2001, c. 470, §2 (NEW).]

D. Two initial appointees are appointed for one-year terms, 2 are appointed for 2-year terms and one is appointed for a 3-year term, according to a random lot drawing under the supervision of the Secretary of State. Subsequent appointees are appointed to serve 3-year terms. A person may not serve more than 2 consecutive terms, except that if a person is appointed to fill the unexpired portion of a term to fill a vacancy under paragraph F and that portion is less than 2 years, the person may serve 2 consecutive full terms thereafter. [PL 2019, c. 323, §1 (AMD).]

E. The commission members shall elect one member to serve as chair for at least a 2-year term. [PL 2001, c. 470, §2 (NEW).]

F. Upon a vacancy during an unexpired term, the term must be filled as provided in this paragraph for the unexpired portion of the term only. The nominee must be appointed by the Governor from a list of 3 qualified candidates provided by the Senate caucus leader or House caucus leader of the party from the body of the Legislature that suggested the appointee who created the vacancy. If the vacancy during an unexpired term was created by the commission member who was appointed from the list of candidates presented to the Governor by the Senate caucus leaders and House caucus leaders jointly, the nominee must be appointed from a list of 3 qualified candidates provided jointly by the Senate caucus leaders and House caucus leaders. If the list of 3 qualified candidates required by this paragraph to be presented to the Governor jointly by the Senate caucus leaders and House caucus leaders is not produced within 60 days after the vacancy is created, then each Senate caucus leader and House caucus leader shall present within the subsequent 15 days a separate list of 3 qualified candidates to the Governor, who shall appoint a candidate from these lists within 30 days of receiving the lists. Nominees appointed pursuant to this paragraph are subject to review by the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over election practices and legislative ethics and to confirmation by the Legislature. [PL 2019, c. 635, §1 (AMD).]

G. Upon a vacancy created by an expired term, the vacancy must be filled as provided in this paragraph. The nominee must be appointed by the Governor from a list of 3 qualified candidates provided by the Senate caucus leader or House caucus leader of the party from the body of the Legislature that suggested the appointee whose term expired. When a vacancy is created by an expired term of the commission member who was appointed from the list of candidates presented to the Governor by the Senate caucus leaders and House caucus leaders jointly, the nominee must be appointed from a list of 3 qualified candidates provided jointly by the Senate caucus leaders and House caucus leaders. If the list of 3 qualified candidates required by this paragraph to be presented to the Governor jointly by the Senate caucus leaders and House caucus leaders is not produced within 60 days after the vacancy is created, then each Senate caucus leader and House caucus leader shall present within the subsequent 15 days a separate list of 3 qualified candidates to the Governor, who shall appoint a candidate from these lists within 30 days of receiving the lists. Nominees appointed pursuant to this paragraph are subject to review by the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over election practices and legislative ethics and to confirmation by the Legislature. [PL 2019, c. 635, §1 (AMD).]

H. For the purposes of this subsection, "Senate caucus leader" has the same meaning as in Title 21-A, section 1053-C, subsection 1, paragraph C and "House caucus leader" has the same meaning as in Title 21-A, section 1053-C, subsection 1, paragraph A. [PL 2019, c. 635, §1 (AMD).]
[PL 2019, c. 635, §1 (AMD).]

2. Qualifications. The members of the commission must be persons of recognized judgment, probity and objectivity. A person may not be appointed to this commission who is a member of the Legislature or who was a member of the previous Legislature, who was a declared candidate for an elective county, state or federal office within 2 years prior to the appointment or who now holds an elective county, state or federal office. A person may not serve on the commission who is an officer, director, employee or primary decision maker of a party committee, political action committee or candidate committee authorized under Title 21-A, section 1013-A, subsection 1, paragraph B. [PL 2007, c. 571, §1 (AMD).]

2-A. Conflict of interest. This subsection governs conflicts of interest of members of the commission.

A. A member of the commission has a conflict of interest in a matter before the commission if the member has a business or close political relationship with a party to the matter. A close political

relationship exists when a member has significant past or ongoing involvement with a political committee or a candidate, as defined in Title 21-A, section 1, subsection 30 and subsection 5, respectively, or other organization involved in the matter, that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the member is unable to objectively consider the matter. A close political relationship is not created by making a contribution to a political committee, organization or candidate; party enrollment status; or mere membership in an organization involved in the matter. [PL 2007, c. 571, §2 (NEW).]

B. If members of the commission have a conflict of interest in a matter before the commission, the members shall recuse themselves from the matter and may not vote on or attempt to influence the outcome of the matter. Whether or not recusal is required under this paragraph, members of the commission shall consider recusing themselves from any matter that would give rise to an appearance of a conflict of interest. [PL 2007, c. 571, §2 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 571, §2 (NEW).]

2-B. Annual disclosure statement. Each member shall file a disclosure statement with the executive director of the commission by February 15th of each year, which must include:

A. The names of and the positions held in all candidate committees, political action committees, ballot question committees and party committees of which the member or the member's spouse or domestic partner was an officer, director or primary decision maker or fund raiser during the previous calendar year; [PL 2007, c. 571, §3 (NEW).]

B. The names of and positions held in all nonprofit or commercial organizations of which the member or the member's spouse or domestic partner was an owner, officer, director or primary decision maker or fund raiser that, during the previous calendar year, made expenditures of more than \$1,500 to influence an election or employed a lobbyist who was required to register with the commission; and [PL 2007, c. 571, §3 (NEW).]

C. Any additional information that the commission determines appropriate. [PL 2007, c. 571, §3 (NEW).]

A member shall notify the executive director if the member becomes an officer, director, employee or primary decision maker or fund raiser of a party committee, political action committee, ballot question committee or candidate committee within 21 days of the event.

[PL 2007, c. 571, §3 (NEW).]

3. Oath. Each member, within 10 days of that member's appointment, shall take an oath of office to faithfully discharge the duties of a commissioner in the form prescribed by the Constitution. Such oath must be subscribed to by the commissioner taking it, certified by the officer before whom it is taken and immediately filed in the Office of the Secretary of State.

[RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §18 (COR).]

4. Legislative per diem. The members of the commission are entitled to receive legislative per diem according to Title 5, chapter 379.

[IB 1995, c. 1, §2 (AMD).]

5. Employees. The commission shall employ an executive director and such other assistance as may be necessary to carry out its duties. The commission also shall retain a general counsel or a computer analyst as an employee of the commission, based on the staffing needs of the executive director. If the commission employs a general counsel, the general counsel may not hold any other state office or otherwise be employed by the State. The commission shall select the executive director by an affirmative vote of at least 4 commission members.

[PL 2003, c. 381, §1 (AMD).]

6. Prohibited activities. A member of the commission may not engage in political fund-raising to promote the election or defeat of a candidate, passage or defeat of a ballot measure or endorse a

political candidate. This prohibition does not apply to fund-raising for campaigns or endorsement of candidates at the county or municipal level or out-of-state nonfederal elections.

[PL 2005, c. 271, §2 (NEW).]

7. Removal of members. A member of the commission may be removed by the Governor for inefficiency, willful neglect of duty, malfeasance in office, engaging in prohibited activities or failure to continually meet the qualifications set out by this section or to comply with the disclosure requirements, but only with the review and concurrence of the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over election practices and legislative ethics upon hearing in executive session, or impeachment by the Legislature. Before removing a board member, the Governor shall notify the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the removal and the reasons for the removal.

[PL 2007, c. 571, §4 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1983, c. 812, §1 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 503, §B1 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 86 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 880, §1 (AMD). IB 1995, c. 1, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 430, §1 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 470, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 381, §1 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 271, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 295, §1 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 252, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 571, §§1-4 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 323, §1 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 635, §1 (AMD). RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §18 (COR).

§1003. Procedures, rules and regulations

1. Procedures, rules and regulations. The commission shall adopt such procedures, rules and regulations as may appear necessary for the orderly, prompt, fair and efficient carrying out of its duties, consistent with this chapter.

[PL 1979, c. 541, §4 (AMD).]

2. Records. Except as provided in section 1013, all records of the commission, including business records, reports made to or by the commission, findings of fact and opinions, must be made available to any interested member of the public who may wish to review them. Any member of the public may request copies of any record held by the commission that is available for public inspection. The commission shall furnish these copies upon payment of a fee covering the cost of reproducing them.

[PL 2007, c. 642, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1979, c. 541, §A4 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 642, §1 (AMD).

§1004. Meetings

The commission shall meet on the call of the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate to perform the duties required of it or as specifically provided in this chapter. The commission shall also meet at other times at the call of the chair or at the call of a majority of the members, provided all members are notified of the time, place and purpose of the meeting at least 24 hours in advance. [PL 2001, c. 430, §2 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1977, c. 252, §1 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 430, §2 (AMD).

§1005. Open meetings

Notwithstanding chapter 13 and except as provided in section 1013, subsection 3-A, all meetings, hearings or sessions of the commission are open to the general public unless, by an affirmative vote of at least 3 members, the commission requires the exclusion of the public. [PL 2007, c. 642, §2 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1997, c. 562, §D1 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 562, §D11 (AFF). PL 2001, c. 430, §3 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 642, §2 (AMD).

§1006. Assistance

The commission may call for the aid or assistance in the performance of its duties on the Attorney General, Secretary of State, Office of the State Auditor or any law enforcement agency in this State. When called upon, these agencies shall comply to the utmost of their ability. [PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW); PL 2013, c. 16, §10 (REV).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 2013, c. 16, §10 (REV).

§1007. Annual report

The commission shall submit to the Legislature and the public an annual report discussing its activities under this chapter and any changes it considers necessary or appropriate regarding ethical standards. [PL 1989, c. 561, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 561, §1 (AMD).

§1008. General duties

The general duties of the commission shall be: [PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW).]

1. Legislative ethics. To investigate and make advisory recommendations to the appropriate body of any apparent violations of legislative ethics;
[PL 2007, c. 642, §3 (AMD).]

2. Election practices. To administer and investigate any violations of the requirements for campaign reports and campaign financing, including the provisions of the Maine Clean Election Act and the Maine Clean Election Fund;
[PL 2001, c. 430, §4 (AMD).]

3. Ethics seminar. To conduct, in conjunction with the Attorney General and the Chair of the Legislative Council or their designees, an ethics seminar for Legislators after the general election and before the convening of the Legislature, in every even-numbered year. The Attorney General shall provide each Legislator with a bound compilation of the laws of this State pertaining to legislative ethics and conduct;
[IB 1995, c. 1, §4 (AMD).]

4. Lobbyist activities. To administer the lobbyist disclosure laws, Title 3, chapter 15, and enforce the waiting period required before former Legislators may engage in compensated lobbying as provided by section 1024;
[PL 2013, c. 129, §1 (AMD).]

5. Maine Clean Election Act and Maine Clean Election Fund. To administer and ensure the effective implementation of the Maine Clean Election Act and the Maine Clean Election Fund according to Title 21-A, chapter 14; and
[IB 1995, c. 1, §6 (NEW).]

6. Enhanced monitoring. To provide for enhanced monitoring and enforcement of election practices and the electronic submission of reports and computerized tracking of campaign, election and lobbying information under the commission's jurisdiction.
[PL 2005, c. 301, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1977, c. 337, §1 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 561, §§2,3 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 691, §§1-3 (AMD). IB 1995, c. 1, §§3-6 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 430, §4 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 20, §J1 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 301, §1 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 642, §3 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 129, §1 (AMD).

§1009. Recommendations to Legislature

Following a general election, the commission may solicit suggestions for improving campaign financing and reporting and the administration of the other areas within the commission's jurisdiction. The commission shall review the suggestions and may submit legislation within 90 days of the general election based on those suggestions or on proposals by individual members of the commission or its staff. [PL 2009, c. 208, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2005, c. 301, §2 (NEW). PL 2009, c. 208, §1 (AMD).

SUBCHAPTER 2

LEGISLATIVE ETHICS

§1011. Statement of purpose

The Maine Legislature enjoys a high reputation for progressive accomplishment. The vast majority of its members are public officers of integrity and dedication, seeking at all times to maintain high standards of ethical conduct. [PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW).]

The public interest is best served by attracting and retaining in the Legislature individuals of high caliber and attainment. The public interest will suffer if unduly stringent requirements deprive government "of the services of all but princes and paupers." [RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §19 (COR).]

Membership in the Legislature is not a full-time occupation and is not compensated on that basis; moreover, it is measured in 2-year terms, requiring each member to recognize and contemplate that the election of that member will not provide that member with any career tenure. [RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §20 (COR).]

Most Legislators must look to income from private sources, not their public salaries, for their sustenance and support for their families; moreover, they must plan for the day when they must return to private employment, business or their professions. [PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW).]

The increasing complexity of government at all levels, with broader intervention into private affairs, makes conflicts of interest almost inevitable for all part-time public officials, and particularly for Legislators who must cast their votes on measures affecting the lives of almost every citizen or resident of the State. The adoption of broader standards of ethics for Legislators does not impugn either their integrity or their dedication; rather it recognizes the increasing complexity of government and private life and will provide them with helpful advice and guidance when confronted with unprecedented or difficult problems in that gray area involving action which is neither clearly right nor clearly wrong. [PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW).]

If public confidence in government is to be maintained and enhanced, it is not enough that public officers avoid acts of misconduct. They must also scrupulously avoid acts which may create an appearance of misconduct. [PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW).]

The Legislature cannot legislate morals and the resolution of ethical problems must indeed rest largely in the individual conscience. The Legislature may and should, however, define ethical standards, as most professions have done, to chart the areas of real or apparent impropriety. [PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §§19, 20 (COR).

§1012. Definitions

As used in this subchapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings. [PL 1989, c. 561, §4 (RPR).]

1. Close economic association. "Close economic association" means the employers, employees, partners or clients of the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family; corporations in which the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family is an officer, director or agent or owns 10% or more of the outstanding capital stock; a business which is a significant unsecured creditor of the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family; or a business of which the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family is a significant unsecured creditor. [PL 1989, c. 561, §4 (RPR).]

1-A. Associated organization. "Associated organization" means any organization in which a Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family is a managerial employee, director, officer or trustee or owns or controls, directly or indirectly, and severally or in the aggregate, at least 10% of the outstanding equity. [PL 2011, c. 634, §1 (AMD).]

2. Commission. "Commission" means the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices. [PL 1989, c. 561, §4 (RPR).]

2-A. Domestic partner.
[PL 2021, c. 567, §2 (RP).]

3. Employee. "Employee" means a person in any employment position, including public or private employment, employment with a nonprofit, religious, charitable or educational organization, or any other compensated service under an expressed, implied, oral or written contract for hire, but does not include a self-employed person. [PL 1989, c. 561, §4 (RPR).]

4. Gift. "Gift" means anything of value, including forgiveness of an obligation or debt, given to a person without that person providing equal or greater consideration to the giver. "Gift" does not include:

A. Gifts received from a single source during the reporting period with an aggregate value of \$300 or less; [PL 1989, c. 561, §4 (NEW).]

B. A bequest or other form of inheritance; [PL 1995, c. 33, §1 (AMD).]

C. A gift received from a relative or from an individual on the basis of a personal friendship as long as that individual is not a registered lobbyist or lobbyist associate under Title 3, section 313, unless the Legislator has reason to believe that the gift was provided because of the Legislator's official position and not because of a personal friendship; [PL 2009, c. 258, §1 (AMD).]

D. A subscription to a newspaper, news magazine or other news publication; [PL 2009, c. 258, §1 (AMD).]

E. Legal services provided in a matter of legislative ethics; [PL 2009, c. 258, §1 (AMD).]

F. A meal, if the meal is a prayer breakfast or a meal served during a meeting to establish a prayer breakfast; or [PL 2009, c. 258, §1 (NEW).]

G. A meal, if the meal is provided by industry or special interest organizations as part of the informational program presented to a group of public servants. [PL 2009, c. 258, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 258, §1 (AMD).]

5. Honorarium. "Honorarium" means a payment of money or anything with a monetary resale value to a Legislator for an appearance or a speech by the Legislator. Honorarium does not include reimbursement for actual and necessary travel expenses for an appearance or speech. Honorarium does not include a payment for an appearance or a speech that is unrelated to the person's official capacity or duties as a member of the Legislature.

[PL 1989, c. 561, §4 (NEW).]

6. Immediate family. "Immediate family" means a Legislator's spouse, domestic partner or dependent children.

[PL 2009, c. 208, §3 (AMD).]

7. Income. "Income" means economic gain to a person from any source, including, but not limited to, compensation for services, including fees, commissions and payments in kind; gross income derived from business; gross income derived from dealings in property, rents and royalties; gross income from investments including interest, capital gains and dividends; annuities; income from life insurance and endowment contracts; pensions; income from discharge of indebtedness; distributions from a partnership or limited liability company; gross income from an interest in an estate or trust; prizes; and grants, but does not include gifts or honoraria. Income received in kind includes, but is not limited to, the transfer of property and options to buy or lease, and stock certificates. "Income" does not include alimony and separate maintenance payments, child support payments or campaign contributions accepted for state or federal office or funds or other property held in trust for another, including but not limited to money to be spent on behalf of a client for payment of a licensing or filing fee.

A. [PL 2011, c. 634, §2 (RP).]

B. [PL 2011, c. 634, §2 (RP).]

[PL 2011, c. 634, §2 (AMD).]

7-A. Managerial employee. "Managerial employee" means an employee of an organization whose position requires substantial control over the organization's decision making, business operations, financial management or contracting and procurement activities. For the purposes of this subsection, financial management does not include tasks that are considered clerical in nature.

[PL 2011, c. 634, §3 (NEW).]

8. Relative. "Relative" means an individual who is related to the Legislator or the Legislator's spouse or the Legislator's domestic partner as a parent; child; sibling; sibling of a parent; sibling of a parent once removed; first cousin; child of a sibling or of a spouse's or domestic partner's sibling; spouse; domestic partner; grandparent; grandchild; parent-in-law; spouse or domestic partner of a child; sibling of a spouse or domestic partner; stepparent; stepchild; stepsibling; and half-sibling and includes the betrothed of the Legislator.

[RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §21 (COR).]

8-A. Reportable liability. "Reportable liability" means any unsecured loan of \$3,000 or more received from a person who is not a relative. "Reportable liability" does not include:

A. A credit card liability; [PL 2011, c. 634, §5 (NEW).]

B. An educational loan made or guaranteed by a governmental entity, educational institution or nonprofit organization; or [PL 2011, c. 634, §5 (NEW).]

C. A loan made from a state or federally regulated financial institution for business purposes. [PL 2011, c. 634, §5 (NEW).]

[PL 2011, c. 634, §5 (NEW).]

9. Self-employed. "Self-employed" means that the person qualifies as an independent contractor under Title 39-A, section 102, subsection 13-A.

[PL 2011, c. 643, §1 (AMD); PL 2011, c. 643, §14 (AFF).]

10. Violation of legislative ethics. "Violation of legislative ethics" means a violation of the prohibitions in section 1014 or 1015-A.

[PL 2019, c. 534, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 561, §4 (RPR). PL 1991, c. 885, §E1 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 885, §E47 (AFF). PL 1995, c. 33, §§1,2 (AMD). RR 2001, c. 1, §6 (COR). PL 2001, c. 430, §5 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 268, §1 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 642, §§4, 5 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 208, §§2-4 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 258, §1 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 634, §§1-5 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 643, §1 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 643, §14 (AFF). PL 2019, c. 534, §1 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 567, §2 (AMD). RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §21 (COR).

§1013. Authority; procedures

1. Authority. The commission has authority:

A. To issue, on request of any Legislator on an issue involving that Legislator, or on its own motion, written advisory opinions and guidance on problems or questions involving possible violations of legislative ethics; [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (AMD).]

B. To investigate complaints alleging a violation of legislative ethics against any Legislator, to investigate a possible violation of legislative ethics upon the commission's own motion, to hold hearings on an alleged or possible violation if the commission determines it is appropriate and to issue findings of fact together with its opinion; and [PL 2011, c. 471, §1 (AMD).]

C. To administer the disclosure of sources of income by Legislators as required by this subchapter. [PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2011, c. 471, §1 (AMD).]

2. Procedure. The following procedures apply.

A. Requests for advisory opinions by members of the Legislature must be filed with the commission in writing and signed by the Legislator requesting the opinion and must contain such supporting data as the commission requires. Commission staff shall inform a Legislator upon that Legislator's request for an advisory opinion that written opinions issued by the commission are public and are submitted to the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate and entered into the legislative record. When preparing an advisory opinion on its own motion, the commission shall notify the Legislator concerned and allow the Legislator to provide additional information to the commission. In preparing an advisory opinion, either upon request or on its own motion, the commission may make such an investigation as it determines necessary. A copy of the commission's advisory opinion must be sent to the Legislator concerned and to the presiding officer of the legislative body of which the Legislator is a member. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (AMD).]

B. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (RP).]

B-1. Any person may file a complaint against a Legislator alleging a violation of legislative ethics only as described in sections 1014 and 1015-A. The complaint must be filed in writing and signed under oath and must specify the facts of the alleged violation citing the specific provisions of sections 1014 and 1015-A that are alleged to have been violated, the approximate date of the alleged violation and such other information as the commission requires. A complainant shall agree in writing not to disclose any information about the complaint during the time the commission is determining whether or not to pursue the complaint or during the investigation of a complaint. A complaint that does not meet the criteria of this paragraph is considered incomplete and will not be forwarded to the commission.

- (1) The Legislator against whom a complaint is filed must immediately be given a copy of the complaint and the name of the complainant. Before deciding whether to conduct an investigation or to hold any hearings, the commission shall afford the Legislator an opportunity to answer the complaint in writing and in person to the commission. The commission staff may gather preliminary factual information that will assist the commission in deciding whether to conduct a full investigation or to hold hearings.
 - (2) The commission shall consider only complaints against Legislators in office at the time of the filing of the complaint and only complaints relating to activity that occurred or was ongoing within 2 years of the complaint. Upon a majority vote of the commission, the commission shall conduct an investigation and hold hearings as it determines necessary.
 - (3) The commission shall issue its findings of fact together with its opinion regarding the alleged violation of legislative ethics to the legislative body of which the Legislator concerned is a member. That legislative body may take whatever action it determines appropriate, in accordance with the Constitution of Maine.
 - (4) If the commission determines that a Legislator has potentially violated professional standards set by a licensing board, its opinion and such other information as may be appropriate must be referred to the licensing board that oversees the Legislator's professional conduct. [PL 2019, c. 534, §2 (AMD).]
- B-2. If the commission receives information other than through a complaint suggesting that a Legislator may have committed a violation of legislative ethics, the commission may commence an investigation or conduct hearings when there is probable cause to believe that a violation has occurred. The commission may consider only activities by a Legislator in office at the time of the investigation that occurred or were ongoing within 2 years of the investigation. The commission shall provide the Legislator with written notice of the possible violation and an opportunity to be heard in accordance with the requirements of paragraph B-1. The commission's consideration of the possible violation is subject to the confidentiality provisions of subsection 3-A. [PL 2011, c. 471, §3 (NEW).]
- C. When the conduct of a particular Legislator is under inquiry and a hearing is to be held, the Legislator must be given written notification of the time and place at which the hearing is to be held. Such notification must be given not less than 10 days prior to the date set for the hearing. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (AMD).]
- D. The commission has authority, through its chair or any member designated by the chair, to administer oaths, subpoena witnesses and compel the production of books, records, papers, documents, correspondence and other material and records the commission determines relevant. The State, its agencies and instrumentalities shall furnish to the commission any information, records or documents the commission designates as being necessary for the exercise of its functions and duties. In the case of refusal of any person to obey an order or subpoena of the commission, the Superior Court, upon application of the commission, has jurisdiction and authority to require compliance with the order or subpoena. Any failure of any person to obey an order of the Superior Court may be punished by that court as contempt thereof. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (AMD).]
- E. The commission shall adopt rules consistent with due process for the conduct of investigations and hearings under this subchapter. Rules adopted pursuant to this paragraph are major substantive rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.
- The commission is not bound by the strict rules of evidence, but its findings and opinions must be based upon competent and substantial evidence. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (AMD).]

E-1. The commission may permit the complainant to make a presentation to the commission as part of its consideration whether to conduct an investigation or public hearing. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (NEW).]

F. If the commission concludes that it appears that a Legislator has violated a criminal law, a copy of its findings of fact, its opinion and such other information as may be appropriate must be referred to the Attorney General. Any determination by the commission or by a legislative body that a violation of legislative ethics has occurred does not preclude any criminal action relating to the violation that may be brought against the Legislator. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (AMD).]

G. If the commission determines that a complaint filed under oath is frivolous or was filed in bad faith or if the complainant fails to appear at the hearing without being excused by the commission, the commission may order the complainant to pay to the Legislator against whom the complaint has been filed that Legislator's costs of investigation and defense, including any reasonable attorney's fees. This order is considered a final agency action, and the complainant may appeal the order pursuant to the Maine Administrative Procedure Act. If the commission determines that the complaint was filed in bad faith, the commission shall refer the case to the Attorney General for investigation.

Such an order does not preclude any other remedy available to the Legislator against whom the complaint has been filed, including, but not limited to, an action brought in Superior Court against the complainant for damages to the Legislator's reputation. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (AMD).]

H. The commission shall file with the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate a copy of written advisory opinions and guidance issued by the commission that were formally requested by a Legislator and that were considered by the commission at a public meeting, with such deletions and changes as the commission considers necessary to protect the identity of the person seeking the opinions or others. The Clerk of the House shall keep a copy of such opinions and guidance in a special binder and shall finally publish them in the Legislative Record. The commission may exempt an opinion or a part of an opinion from release, publication or inspection if it considers such action appropriate for the protection of 3rd parties and makes available to the public an explanatory statement to that effect. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (AMD).]

I. A copy of the commission's findings of fact and opinions regarding complaints against Legislators must also be filed with the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate. The Clerk of the House shall keep them in a special binder and shall finally publish them in the Legislative Record. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (AMD).]

J. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (RP).]

K. When a Legislator has a question or problem of an emergency nature about a possible violation of legislative ethics or an issue involving that Legislator that arises during the course of legislative action, the Legislator may request an advisory opinion from the presiding officer of the legislative body of which the Legislator is a member. The presiding officer may issue an advisory opinion. An advisory opinion issued by the presiding officer must be in accordance with the principles of this subchapter, be in writing and be reported to the commission. The commission may then issue a further opinion on the matter. The presiding officer may refer such a question or problem directly to the commission, which shall meet as soon as possible to consider the question or problem. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (AMD).]

L. The commission shall make reasonable efforts to resolve a complaint within 90 days of its filing. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (NEW).]
[PL 2019, c. 534, §2 (AMD).]

3. Confidentiality.

[PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (RP).]

3-A. Confidentiality of records and proceedings relating to screening complaints alleging a violation of legislative ethics. Notwithstanding chapter 13, a complaint alleging a violation of legislative ethics is confidential and is not a public record until after the commission has voted pursuant to subsection 2, paragraph B-1 to pursue the complaint, and a commission proceeding to determine whether to pursue a complaint must be conducted in executive session. If the commission does not vote to pursue the complaint, the complaint and records relating to the investigation of that complaint remain confidential and are not public records unless the Legislator against whom the complaint is made submits a written request that the complaint and all accompanying materials be made public. This subsection does not prohibit a complainant from disclosing information that the complainant provided to the commission as part of the complaint or investigation once the commission has determined not to pursue the complaint or the investigation of a complaint is complete. This subsection does not prevent the commission from including general information about complaints in any report to the Legislature. Any person who knowingly breaches the confidentiality of a complaint investigation commits a Class D crime. This subsection does not prevent commission staff from disclosing information to a person from whom the commission is seeking information or evidence relevant to the complaint that is necessary to investigate the complaint or prevent the complainant or the Legislator against whom the complaint is made from discussing the complaint with an attorney or other person assisting them with the complaint. The commission or commission staff shall inform any person with whom they communicate of the requirement to keep any information regarding the complaint investigation confidential.

[PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (NEW).]

4. Confidentiality of records other than complaints. Commission records other than complaints are governed by this subsection.

A. Investigative records relating to complaints that the commission has voted to pursue are confidential unless they are provided to commission members or otherwise distributed at a public hearing of the commission. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (NEW).]

B. Legislators' statements of sources of income are public records. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (NEW).]

C. Findings of fact and recommendations of the commission on complaints alleging violation of legislative ethics are public records. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (NEW).]

D. Advisory opinions of the commission and requests for advisory opinions from the commission are public records, except as provided in subsection 2, paragraph H. [PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (NEW).]

5. Prohibited communications. Communications concerning a complaint filed under this section between commission members and a complainant or between commission members and the subject of a complaint are prohibited until after the commission has voted not to pursue a complaint or the commission has taken final action on the complaint.

[PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1977, c. 252, §2 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 561, §§5,6 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 642, §6 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 471, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 534, §2 (AMD).

§1014. Violations of legislative ethics

1. Situations involving conflict of interest. A Legislator engages in a violation of legislative ethics if that Legislator votes on a question in connection with a conflict of interest in committee or in either body of the Legislature or attempts to influence the outcome of that question unless a presiding officer in accordance with the Joint Rules of the Legislature requires a Legislator to vote or advises the

Legislator that there is no conflict in accordance with section 1013, subsection 2, paragraph K. A conflict of interest includes:

A. When a Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family has or acquires a direct substantial personal financial interest, distinct from that of the general public, in an enterprise that would be financially benefited by proposed legislation, or derives a direct substantial personal financial benefit from close economic association with a person known by the Legislator to have a direct financial interest in an enterprise affected by proposed legislation; [PL 2007, c. 642, §7 (AMD).]

B. When a Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family accepts gifts, other than campaign contributions duly recorded as required by law, from persons affected by legislation or who have an interest in an entity affected by proposed legislation and the Legislator knows or reasonably should know that the purpose of the donor in making the gift is to influence the Legislator in the performance of the Legislator's official duties or vote or is intended as a reward for action on the Legislator's part; [PL 2007, c. 642, §7 (AMD).]

C. Receiving compensation or reimbursement not authorized by law for services, advice or assistance as a Legislator; [PL 2007, c. 642, §7 (AMD).]

D. Appearing for, representing or advocating on behalf of another before the Legislature, unless without compensation and for the benefit of a citizen; [PL 2007, c. 642, §7 (AMD).]

E. When a Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family accepts or engages in employment that could impair the Legislator's judgment, or when the Legislator knows that there is a substantial possibility that an opportunity for employment is being afforded the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family with intent to influence the performance of the Legislator's official duties, or when the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family stands to derive a personal private gain or loss from employment, because of legislative action, distinct from the gain or losses of other employees or the general community; and [RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §22 (COR).]

F. When a Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family has an interest in legislation relating to a profession, trade, business or employment in which the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family is engaged and the benefit derived by the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family is unique and distinct from that of the general public or persons engaged in similar professions, trades, businesses or employment. [PL 2007, c. 642, §7 (AMD).] [RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §22 (COR).]

2. Undue influence.

[PL 2009, c. 258, §2 (RP).]

2-A. Undue influence. It is a violation of legislative ethics for a Legislator to engage in conduct that constitutes the exertion of undue influence, including, but not limited to:

A. Appearing for, representing or advocating for another person in a matter before a state agency or authority, for compensation other than compensation as a Legislator, if the Legislator makes reference to that Legislator's legislative capacity, communicates with the agency or authority on legislative stationery or makes threats or implications relating to legislative action; [PL 2009, c. 258, §3 (NEW).]

B. Appearing for, representing or advocating for another person in a matter before a state agency or authority if the Legislator oversees the policies of the agency or authority as a result of the Legislator's committee responsibilities, unless:

(1) The appearance, representation or advocacy is provided without compensation and for the benefit of a constituent;

(2) The Legislator is engaged in the conduct of the Legislator's profession and is in good standing with a licensing board, if any, that oversees the Legislator's profession;

(3) The appearance, representation or advocacy is provided before a court or office of the judicial branch; or

(4) The representation consists of filing records or reports or performing other routine tasks that do not involve the exercise of discretion on the part of the agency or authority; and [PL 2009, c. 258, §3 (NEW).]

C. Representing or assisting another person in the sale of goods or services to the State, a state agency or a state authority, unless the transaction occurs after public notice and competitive bidding. [PL 2009, c. 258, §3 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 258, §3 (NEW).]

3. Abuse of office or position. It is a violation of legislative ethics for a Legislator to engage in conduct that constitutes an abuse of office or position, including but not limited to:

A. When a Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family has a direct financial interest or an interest through a close economic associate in a contract for goods or services with the State, a state agency or state authority, unless the contract is awarded through competitive bidding or is exempt from competitive bidding pursuant to state purchasing laws or the payment provisions are based on uniform rates established by the State, a state agency, a state authority or other governmental entity; [PL 2007, c. 642, §7 (AMD).]

B. Granting or obtaining special privilege, exemption or preferential treatment to or for oneself or another, which privilege, exemption or treatment is not readily available to members of the general community or class to which the beneficiary belongs; and [PL 2007, c. 642, §7 (AMD).]

C. Use or disclosure of confidential information obtained because of office or position for the benefit of self or another. [PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 642, §7 (AMD).]

4. Contract with state governmental agency. It is a violation of legislative ethics for a Legislator or an associated organization to enter with a state agency into any contract that is to be paid in whole or in part out of governmental funds unless the contract has been awarded through a process of public notice and competitive bidding or is exempt from competitive bidding pursuant to state purchasing laws.

[PL 2007, c. 642, §7 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 642, §7 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 258, §§2, 3 (AMD). RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §22 (COR).

§1015. Prohibited campaign contributions and solicitations

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 561, §7 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 529, §1 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 273, §1 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 648, §1 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 268, §2 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 301, §3 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 279, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 642, §8 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 286, §1 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 534, §3 (RP).

§1015-A. Campaign contributions and solicitations prohibited

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Contribution" has the same meaning as in Title 21-A, section 1012, subsection 2 and includes seed money contributions as defined in Title 21-A, section 1122, subsection 9, and, with respect to political action committees and ballot question committees, includes contributions as defined in Title 21-A, section 1052, subsection 3. "Contribution" does not include qualifying contributions as defined in Title 21-A, section 1122, subsection 7. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

B. "Employer" has the same meaning as in Title 3, section 312-A, subsection 5. "Employer" does not include a lobbying firm. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

C. "Legislative session" means the period of time after the convening of the Legislature and before final adjournment. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

D. "Lobbying firm" has the same meaning as in Title 3, section 312-A, subsection 9-A. [PL 2019, c. 587, §1 (RPR); PL 2019, c. 587, §18 (AFF).]

E. "Lobbyist" has the same meaning as in Title 3, section 312-A, subsection 10. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

F. "Lobbyist associate" has the same meaning as in Title 3, section 312-A, subsection 10-A. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

[PL 2019, c. 587, §1 (AMD); PL 2019, c. 587, §18 (AFF).]

2. Campaign contributions and solicitations prohibited during legislative session. The following provisions prohibit certain contributions and solicitations and offers of contributions during a legislative session.

A. The Governor, a member of the Legislature, a constitutional officer or the staff or agent of these officials may not intentionally solicit or accept a contribution from a lobbyist, lobbyist associate, employer of a lobbyist or lobbying firm during a legislative session. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

B. A lobbyist, lobbyist associate, employer of a lobbyist or lobbying firm may not intentionally give, offer or promise a contribution to the Governor, a member of the Legislature, a constitutional officer or the staff or agent of these officials during a legislative session. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

C. The prohibitions in paragraphs A and B apply to contributions directly and indirectly solicited or accepted by or given, offered and promised to a political action committee, ballot question committee or party committee of which the Governor, a member of the Legislature, a constitutional officer or the staff or agent of these officials is a treasurer, officer or primary fund-raiser or decision maker. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

D. The prohibitions in paragraphs A and B do not apply to the following:

(1) The solicitation or acceptance of a contribution from or the offer or promise of a contribution by a lobbyist, lobbyist associate, employer of a lobbyist or lobbying firm that is not the property of that lobbyist, lobbyist associate, employer of a lobbyist or lobbying firm;

(2) The solicitation or acceptance of a contribution from or the offer or promise of a contribution by an employer of a lobbyist or lobbying firm related to a special election to fill a vacancy from the time of announcement of the election until the election; or

(3) The solicitation or acceptance of a contribution from or the offer or promise of a contribution by a lobbyist or lobbyist associate related to a special election to fill a vacancy from the time of announcement of the election until the election if the lobbyist or lobbyist associate is eligible to vote or will be eligible to vote on the day of the election in the district where the special election will appear on the ballot. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

[PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

3. Campaign contributions and solicitations prohibited when Legislature not in legislative session. The following provisions prohibit certain contributions and solicitations and offers of contributions when the Legislature is not in legislative session.

A. When the Legislature is not in legislative session, the Governor, a member of the Legislature or the staff or agent of these officials may not intentionally solicit or accept a contribution from a lobbyist or lobbyist associate unless the lobbyist or lobbyist associate is eligible to vote or will be eligible to vote on the day of the election in a district where the Governor or member of the Legislature will appear on the ballot. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

B. When the Legislature is not in legislative session, a lobbyist or lobbyist associate may not intentionally give, offer or promise a contribution to the Governor, a member of the Legislature or the staff or agent of these officials unless the lobbyist or lobbyist associate is eligible to vote or will be eligible to vote on the day of the election in a district where the Governor or member of the Legislature will appear on the ballot. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

C. The prohibitions in paragraphs A and B do not apply to the solicitation or acceptance of a contribution from or the offer or promise of a contribution by a lobbyist or lobbyist associate that is not the property of that lobbyist or lobbyist associate. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

D. The prohibitions in paragraphs A and B do not apply to the solicitation or acceptance of a contribution from or the offer or promise of a contribution by an employer of a lobbyist or a lobbying firm. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

[PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

4. Campaign contributions and solicitations prohibited at all times. The following provisions prohibit certain contributions and solicitations and offers of contributions at all times, regardless of whether the Legislature is in legislative session.

A. A gubernatorial or legislative candidate who is not the Governor or a member of the Legislature, or the staff or agent of a gubernatorial or legislative candidate, may not intentionally solicit or accept a contribution from a lobbyist or lobbyist associate unless the lobbyist or lobbyist associate is eligible to vote or will be eligible to vote on the day of the election in a district where the gubernatorial or legislative candidate will appear on the ballot. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

B. A lobbyist or lobbyist associate may not intentionally give, offer or promise a contribution to a gubernatorial or legislative candidate who is not the Governor or a member of the Legislature, or the staff or agent of a gubernatorial or legislative candidate, unless the lobbyist or lobbyist associate is eligible to vote or will be eligible to vote on the day of the election in a district where the gubernatorial or legislative candidate will appear on the ballot. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

C. The prohibitions in paragraphs A and B do not apply to the solicitation or acceptance of a contribution from or the offer or promise of a contribution by a lobbyist or lobbyist associate that is not the property of that lobbyist or lobbyist associate. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

D. The prohibitions in paragraphs A and B do not apply to the solicitation or acceptance of a contribution from or the offer or promise of a contribution by an employer of a lobbyist or lobbying firm. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

[PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

5. Exceptions. This section does not prohibit any of the following.

A. The solicitation, acceptance, offer or gift of money or anything of value for bona fide social events hosted for nonpartisan, charitable purposes. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

B. The solicitation, acceptance, offer or promise of contributions to a member of the Legislature supporting that member's campaign for federal office. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

C. The attendance of the Governor, a member of the Legislature, a constitutional officer, a gubernatorial or legislative candidate or the staff or agent of these persons at fund-raising events held by a municipal, county, state or national political party organized pursuant to Title 21-A, chapter 5, nor the advertisement of the expected presence of any such person at any such event, as long as any such person has no involvement in soliciting attendance at the event and all proceeds are paid directly to the political party organization hosting the event or a nonprofit charitable organization. [PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

[PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

6. Violations. The commission may undertake investigations to determine whether any person has violated this section. A person who violates this section is subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000 for each violation, payable to the State and recoverable in a civil action. A contribution accepted in violation of this section must be returned to the contributor.

[PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2019, c. 534, §4 (NEW). PL 2019, c. 587, §1 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 587, §18 (AFF).

§1016. Statement of sources of income

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 561, §8 (RP).

§1016-A. Disclosure of specific sources of income

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1989, c. 561, §9 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 608, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 734 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 75, §1 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 704, §1 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 634, §6 (RP).

§1016-B. Disclosure of reportable liabilities

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1989, c. 561, §10 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 331, §1 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 634, §7 (RP).

§1016-C. Reports by legislative candidates

A candidate, as defined in Title 21-A, section 1, subsection 5, for the Legislature who is not required to file a report under section 1016-G shall file a report containing the same information required of Legislators under section 1016-G no later than 5 p.m. on August 15th preceding the general election unless the candidate withdraws from the election in accordance with Title 21-A, section 374-A by that date. A candidate shall file statements electronically as is required of Legislators under section 1016-G, subsection 5. If the candidate fails to file the statement by August 15th, the commission may assess penalties in accordance with section 1016-G, subsection 3. [RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. A, §1 (COR).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1991, c. 880, §2 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 471, §4 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 634, §8 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 132, §1 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 324, §1 (AMD). RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. A, §1 (COR).

§1016-D. Disclosure of bids on government contracts

When a Legislator or associated organization bids on a contract with a state governmental agency, the Legislator or associated organization shall file a statement with the commission no later than 5:00

p.m. on the day the bid is submitted that discloses the subject of the bid and the names of the Legislator, associated organization and state governmental agency as appropriate. The bid disclosure statement filed under this section must be on a form prescribed by the commission and is a public record as defined in section 402. [PL 2003, c. 268, §3 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 268, §3 (NEW).

§1016-E. Disclosure of interests

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 704, §2 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 634, §9 (RP).

§1016-F. Internet disclosure

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 704, §3 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 634, §10 (RP).

§1016-G. Disclosure of specific sources of income, interests and reportable liabilities

Each Legislator shall annually file with the commission a statement identifying the sources of income received, positions held and reportable liabilities incurred during the preceding calendar year by the Legislator or members of the Legislator's immediate family. A Legislator who has completed service in the Legislature shall file the statement within 45 days of the Legislator's last day of service to disclose the sources of income in the Legislator's final calendar year of service. [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]

1. Content of statement. The name and, where applicable, the job title of the individual earning or receiving the income must be disclosed, unless otherwise noted. Each source of income must be identified by name, address and principal type of economic or business activity. If disclosure of this type is prohibited by statute, rule or an established code of professional ethics, it is sufficient for the Legislator to specify the principal type of economic or business activity from which the income is derived.

The statement must identify:

- A. If the Legislator is an employee of another person, firm, corporation, association or organization that has provided the Legislator with compensation of \$2,000 or more, the name and address of the employer. The Legislator shall identify the title and position held by the Legislator; [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]
- B. If the Legislator is self-employed, the name and address of the Legislator's business and each source of income derived from self-employment that represents more than 10% of the Legislator's gross income from self-employment or \$2,000, whichever is greater; [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]
- C. The name, address and principal economic or business activity of any corporation, partnership, limited liability company or other business in which the Legislator or members of the Legislator's immediate family own or control, directly or indirectly, more than 5% of the outstanding equity, whether individually or in the aggregate, that has received revenue of \$2,000 or more; [PL 2013, c. 401, §1 (AMD).]
- D. Each source of income of \$2,000 or more the Legislator derived from providing services as an attorney, the major areas of law practiced by the Legislator and, if associated with a law firm, the major areas of practice of the firm; [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]

- E. Each source of income of \$2,000 or more received by the Legislator and a description of the nature of the income, such as rental income, dividend income and capital gains; [PL 2013, c. 401, §1 (AMD).]
- F. The specific source of each gift received by the Legislator; [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]
- G. Each source of income of \$2,000 or more received by any member of the immediate family of the Legislator, except that the Legislator is not required to identify the names of dependent children. If the member of the Legislator's immediate family received income of \$2,000 or more in compensation, the Legislator shall identify the source of the compensation, the type of the economic activity and the title of the position held by the immediate family member; [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]
- H. Each source of honoraria of \$2,000 or more that the Legislator accepted; [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]
- I. Each executive branch agency before which the Legislator or any immediate family member has represented or assisted others for compensation; [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]
- J. Each state governmental agency, board or commission to which the Legislator, a member of the Legislator's immediate family or an associated organization has sold, rented or leased goods or services with a value of \$10,000 or more during the preceding calendar year and a description of the goods or services sold, rented or leased; [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]
- K. Each party as defined in Title 21-A, section 1, subsection 28, including a party committee, and each organization that is required under Title 21-A, chapter 13 to register with the commission as a political action committee or ballot question committee for which the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family is a treasurer, principal officer or principal fund-raiser or decision maker; [PL 2013, c. 401, §1 (AMD).]
- L. Any offices, trusteeships, directorships or positions of any nature, whether compensated or uncompensated, held by the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family with any for-profit or nonprofit firm, corporation, association, limited liability company, partnership or business. For the purposes of this paragraph, service as a clerk of a corporation or as a registered agent authorized to receive service of any process, notice or other demand for a business entity is not considered a position with the corporation or business entity; and [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]
- M. All reportable liabilities incurred by the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family during the reporting period. [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]
[PL 2013, c. 401, §1 (AMD).]

2. Time for filing. The following provisions govern the time for filing statements.

- A. Each Legislator shall file with the commission by 5:00 p.m. on February 15th of each year on the form provided by the commission a statement of the sources of income, interests and reportable liabilities for the preceding calendar year required by subsection 1. Prior to the end of the first week in January of each year, the commission shall deliver a form to each Senator and member of the House of Representatives. [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]
- B. A Legislator shall file an updated statement concerning the current calendar year if the income, reportable liabilities or positions of the Legislator or an immediate family member, except for dependent children, substantially change from those disclosed in the Legislator's most recent statement. Substantial changes include, but are not limited to, a new employer that has paid the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family \$2,000 or more during the current year, another source that has provided the Legislator or a member of the Legislator's immediate family, excluding dependent children, with income that totals \$2,000 or more during the current

year or the acceptance of a new position with a for-profit or nonprofit firm that is reportable under subsection 1, paragraph L. The Legislator shall file the updated statement within 30 days of the substantial change in income, reportable liabilities or positions. [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).] [PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]

3. Penalties. Penalties for violations of this section are as follows.

A. Failing to file a statement within 15 days of having been notified by the commission is subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$250 for a Legislator or \$100 for a candidate payable to the commission. A statement is not considered filed unless it substantially conforms to the requirements of this subchapter and is properly signed. The commission shall determine whether a statement substantially conforms to the requirements of this subchapter. [PL 2023, c. 324, §2 (AMD).]

B. The intentional filing of a false statement is a Class E crime. If the commission concludes that it appears that a Legislator has willfully filed a false statement, it shall refer its findings of fact to the Attorney General. If the commission determines that a Legislator has willfully failed to file a statement required by this subchapter or has willfully filed a false statement, the Legislator is presumed to have a conflict of interest on every question. [PL 2019, c. 534, §5 (AMD).]

Within 3 business days of a filing deadline, the commission shall mail a notice to a Legislator or candidate who has failed to file a statement required under this subchapter. If a Legislator or candidate does not file the statement within 15 days of the notice, the commission shall mail a notice of a preliminary penalty of \$250 for a Legislator or \$100 for a candidate pursuant to paragraph A. The Legislator or candidate may request a waiver of the penalty within 15 days of the penalty notice. If no request is made, the preliminary penalty of \$250 for a Legislator or \$100 for a candidate is final. If the Legislator or candidate requests a waiver, the commission shall consider the request at its next meeting for a determination of the final penalty, if any. The commission staff shall confirm a final penalty in a written determination to the Legislator or candidate who did not file the statement on time. The commission's determination may be appealed to the Superior Court in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 7 and the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 80C. Penalties assessed pursuant to this subsection may be enforced in accordance with Title 21-A, section 1004-B.

4. Rules, procedures and forms. The commission may adopt or amend rules to specify the reportable categories or types and the procedures and forms for reporting and to administer this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW).]

5. Public record. Statements filed under this section are public records. The commission shall provide a means for Legislators to file statements in an electronic format that must immediately place the statements on a publicly accessible website. Legislators shall file statements required by this section using the electronic format prescribed by the commission. If a Legislator can attest to an inability to access or use the electronic filing format, the commission may provide assistance to the Legislator to ensure proper and timely placement of the required statements on the publicly accessible website.

[PL 2013, c. 401, §2 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2011, c. 634, §11 (NEW). PL 2013, c. 401, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 534, §5 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 324, §2 (AMD).

§1017. Form; contents

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1977, c. 252, §3 (AMD). PL 1981, c. 698, §2 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 561, §11 (RP).

§1017-A. Civil penalties; late and incomplete statements; failure to file

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 268, §4 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 704, §4 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 634, §12 (RP).

§1018. Updating statement

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1977, c. 252, §4 (RPR). PL 2001, c. 75, §2 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 634, §13 (RP).

§1019. False statement; failure to file

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1977, c. 252, §5 (AMD). PL 1977, c. 696, §12 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 471, §5 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 634, §14 (RP).

§1020. Penalty for false accusations

A person who files a false charge of a conflict of interest with the commission or a member of the commission that the person does not believe to be true, or a person who induces another to file a false charge of a conflict of interest that the person does not believe to be true, is guilty of a Class E crime. [RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §23 (COR).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). PL 1977, c. 696, §13 (RPR). RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §23 (COR).

§1021. Membership on boards, authorities or commissions

It is not a conflict of interest for a Legislator to serve on a public board, authority or commission created by the Legislature so long as a consideration is not paid to the Legislator other than the Legislator's actual expenses. [RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §24 (COR).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 621, §1 (NEW). RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §24 (COR).

§1022. Disciplinary guidelines

The Legislature shall adopt, publish, maintain and implement, as authorized in the Constitution of Maine, Article IV, Part Third, Section 4, disciplinary guidelines and procedures for Legislators, including the violations of ethical standards, penalties of reprimand, censure or expulsion and the procedures under which these or other penalties may be imposed. [PL 1989, c. 561, §12 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1989, c. 561, §12 (NEW).

§1023. Code of ethics

The Legislature by Joint Rule shall adopt and publish a code of ethics for Legislators and legislative employees. [PL 1989, c. 561, §12 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1989, c. 561, §12 (NEW).

§1024. Waiting period before engaging in lobbying activities

1. Actions precluded beginning with the 127th Legislature.

[RR 2019, c. 1, Pt. A, §1 (COR); MRSA T. 1 §1024, sub-§1 (RP).]

1-A. Actions precluded beginning with the 130th Legislature. Beginning with the convening of the 130th Legislature, a person who has served as a Legislator may not engage in compensated lobbying until one year after that person's term as a Legislator ends.

[PL 2019, c. 57, §2 (NEW).]

2. Complaints and investigations. A person may file a complaint with the commission specifying an alleged violation of this section. The commission staff shall notify the party against whom the complaint has been filed and may undertake the investigation of the alleged violation if directed by the commission. The commission may direct commission staff to undertake an investigation of an alleged violation of this section on its own motion.

[PL 2013, c. 129, §2 (NEW).]

3. Penalty. A person who intentionally violates this section is subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000, payable to the State and recoverable in a civil action.

[PL 2013, c. 129, §2 (NEW).]

4. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Compensated lobbying" means lobbying conducted by an individual who is specifically employed by another person other than the State or an agency of the State for that purpose or lobbying conducted by an individual as a regular employee of another person other than the State or an agency of the State. "Compensated lobbying" does not include activities for which the individual receives no compensation other than reimbursement for lobbying-related travel within the State and reimbursement for other out-of-pocket expenditures made by the individual for printing, postage and food and lodging connected with lobbying activities paid for by the individual. For the purposes of this paragraph, "reimbursement for other out-of-pocket expenditures" does not include reimbursement for the individual's time spent lobbying that would have been otherwise compensated by an employer or in the course of the individual's employment.

[PL 2019, c. 57, §3 (NEW).]

B. "Lobbying" has the same meaning as in Title 3, section 312-A, subsection 9. [PL 2019, c. 57, §3 (NEW).]

[PL 2019, c. 57, §3 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2013, c. 129, §2 (NEW). PL 2019, c. 57, §§1-3 (AMD). RR 2019, c. 1, Pt. A, §1 (COR).

SUBCHAPTER 3

GUBERNATORIAL TRANSITION

§1051. Gubernatorial inauguration and transition committees

1. Definitions. As used in this subchapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Commission" means the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices. [IB 2015, c. 1, §1 (NEW).]

B. "Election cycle" means the period beginning on the day after the general election for any state, county or municipal office and ending on the day of the next general election for that office. [IB 2015, c. 1, §1 (NEW).]

C. "Governor-elect" means the candidate for the office of Governor elected at the most recent general election. [PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (NEW).]
[PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (AMD).]

2. Inauguration committee; funding. A person may solicit and accept donations for the purpose of financing costs related to the inauguration of a Governor-elect. A person who accepts donations for this purpose shall establish a committee and appoint a treasurer who is responsible for keeping records of donations and for filing a financial disclosure statement required by this section. All donations received must be deposited in a separate and segregated account and may not be commingled with any contributions received by any candidate or political committee, any personal or business funds of any person or donations received by a committee established under subsection 2-A. All donations received by the committee established under this subsection must be used for expenses related to the inauguration; any surplus funds must be disposed of pursuant to subsection 7. A person may make donations to the committee established under this subsection aggregating no more than the amount that an individual may contribute to a gubernatorial candidate under Title 21-A, section 1015, subsection 1. [PL 2023, c. 573, §2 (AMD).]

2-A. Transition committee; funding. A person may solicit and accept donations for the purpose of financing costs related to the transition to office of a Governor-elect. A person who accepts donations for this purpose shall establish a committee and appoint a treasurer who is responsible for keeping records of donations and for filing a financial disclosure statement required by this section. All donations received must be deposited in a separate and segregated account and may not be commingled with any contributions received by any candidate or political committee, any personal or business funds of any person or donations received by a committee established under subsection 2. All donations received by the committee established under this subsection must be used for expenses related to the transition to office; any surplus funds must be disposed of pursuant to subsection 7. A person may make donations to the committee established under this subsection aggregating no more than the amount that an individual may contribute to a gubernatorial candidate under Title 21-A, section 1015, subsection 1, except that the appropriation from the Governor-elect's Expense Account under Title 2, section 3 may be transferred, in whole or in part, to the committee established under this subsection. [PL 2023, c. 573, §3 (NEW).]

3. Registration with the commission and financial disclosure statements. A committee established pursuant to this section shall register and file financial disclosure statements with the commission as required by this subsection.

A. The committee shall register with the commission within 10 days after appointment of a treasurer. The registration must include the name and mailing addresses of the members of the committee, its treasurer and all individuals designated by the committee to raise funds for the committee. [PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (AMD).]

B. Financial disclosure statements must contain the names, addresses, occupations and employers of all donors who have given money or anything of value in a total amount exceeding \$50 to the committee, including in-kind donations of goods or services, along with the amounts and dates of the donations. Donations with a total value of \$50 or less may be disclosed in the aggregate without itemization or other identification. [PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (AMD).]

C. If the committee owes a debt or loan at the end of a time period for a financial disclosure statement, the committee shall report the debt or loan. If a creditor or lender forgives a debt or loan, the committee shall disclose the forgiven debt or loan as a donation. [PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (AMD).]

D. Financial disclosure statements must include the amounts, dates, payees and purposes of all payments made by the committee during the statement period. [PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (AMD).]

E. Financial disclosure statements must be filed by 5:00 p.m. on January 2nd and February 15th following the gubernatorial election and must be complete as of 10 days prior to those filing deadlines. If the committee has surplus funds or an unpaid debt or loan after the end of the statement period for the February 15th statement, the committee shall file bimonthly financial disclosure statements beginning on April 15th until it disposes of all surplus funds and satisfies all debts and loans. [PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (AMD).]

F. The treasurer shall keep a detailed and exact account of all contributions made to the committee and all expenditures made by the committee for one year following the final financial disclosure statement filed by the committee. [PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (AMD).]

4. Limitation on fund-raising activity. A committee established pursuant to this section may accept donations until March 31st of the year following the gubernatorial election. The commission may authorize the acceptance of donations after March 31st of the year following the gubernatorial election if a committee requests such authorization in order to pay a debt or loan related to the transition to office for a committee established under subsection 2-A or inauguration for a committee established under subsection 2.

[PL 2023, c. 573, §4 (AMD).]

5. Prohibited donations during a legislative session. A committee established pursuant to this section may not directly or indirectly solicit or accept a donation from a lobbyist, lobbyist associate or employer during any period of time in which the Legislature is convened before final adjournment. A lobbyist, lobbyist associate or employer may not directly or indirectly give, offer or promise a donation to a committee established pursuant to this section during any period of time in which the Legislature is convened before final adjournment. For purposes of this subsection, "lobbyist" has the same meaning as in Title 3, section 312-A, subsection 10; "lobbyist associate" has the same meaning as in Title 3, section 312-A, subsection 10-A; and "employer" has the same meaning as in Title 3, section 312-A, subsection 5.

[PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (AMD).]

6. Anonymous donations. A committee established pursuant to this section may not accept an anonymous donation in excess of \$50.

[IB 2015, c. 1, §1 (NEW).]

7. Disposing of surplus funds. Any surplus funds remaining in the committee's account must be refunded to one or more donors, donated to a charitable organization that qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under 26 United States Code, Section 501(c)(3) or remitted to the State Treasurer.

[PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (AMD).]

8. Rulemaking. The commission may establish by routine technical rule, adopted in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A, forms and procedures for ensuring compliance with this section.

[IB 2015, c. 1, §1 (NEW).]

9. Enforcement and penalty. The commission shall administer and enforce this subchapter. A person who violates this subchapter is subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$10,000, payable to the State and recoverable in a civil action. In assessing a civil penalty under this subsection, the commission shall consider, among other things, whether the person made a bona fide effort to comply with the requirements of this section, whether the violation occurred as the result of an error by a vendor, consultant or other party outside the control of the person and whether evidence is present that the person intended to conceal or misrepresent its financial activities.

[PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

IB 2015, c. 1, §1 (NEW). PL 2019, c. 564, §1 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 573, §§1-4 (AMD).

The State of Maine claims a copyright in its codified statutes. If you intend to republish this material, we require that you include the following disclaimer in your publication:

All copyrights and other rights to statutory text are reserved by the State of Maine. The text included in this publication reflects changes made through the First Special Session of the 132nd Maine Legislature and is current through January 1, 2026. The text is subject to change without notice. It is a version that has not been officially certified by the Secretary of State. Refer to the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and supplements for certified text.

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes also requests that you send us one copy of any statutory publication you may produce. Our goal is not to restrict publishing activity, but to keep track of who is publishing what, to identify any needless duplication and to preserve the State's copyright rights.

PLEASE NOTE: The Revisor's Office cannot perform research for or provide legal advice or interpretation of Maine law to the public. If you need legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.