

§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).

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