

SS#2 SCS SB 11 -- ETHICS

SPONSOR: Richard (Barnes)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Government Oversight and Accountability by a vote of 7 to 0.

This bill prohibits members of the General Assembly from acting as paid political consultants for a candidate for state representative or state senator, or the candidate committee of the candidate or officeholder.

A two year cooling off period prior to becoming a lobbyist is imposed on members of the General Assembly who begin their first term in January 2017.

The bill modifies the definition of "elected local government official lobbyist" to include individuals who are employed specifically for the purpose of attempting to influence an action by an elected school district official.

The bill modifies the definition of "public official" to include any superintendent of a school district or school board member. The bill stipulates that lobbyists are required to report all entities they represent to the third degree even if they are not directly compensated by the entities.

The bill specifies that lobbyists are required to report expenditures made on behalf of all public officials as that term is defined in Section 105.470, RSMo.

The bill modifies the exceptions to "expenditures" to include any item, service or thing of value transferred to any person within the third degree of affinity of the transferor which is unrelated to any activity of the transferor as a lobbyist.

Expenditures are only allowed to be reported as a group for all senators, all representatives, caucuses, and all statewide officials when attendees are invited at least 48 hours in advance. Staff and employees of the General Assembly or statewide officials may be included as part of these groups. Reporting can no longer be made for joint and standing committees. Furthermore, expenditures that are reported as a group do not need to be separately reported as an expenditure made on behalf of an individual official, if applicable.

Under current law, lobbyist expenditures for out-of-state travel and lodging for members of the General Assembly must be approved by the administration committees in the House and Senate. This bill

bars these expenditures and also bars expenditures for food, beverage and entertainment when it occurs outside of the state. However, the bill permits non-profit organizations to make expenditures for travel and lodging expenses for members of the General Assembly or the member's staff, employees, spouse, or dependent children under specified circumstances.

The bill requires all political officers to complete one hour of ethics training within 120 days after taking office, appointment, or employment. These individuals are additionally required to complete ethics training whenever he or she takes a new political office. Failure to complete the training results in a notice of noncompliance from the Missouri Ethics Commission. Failure to complete training within 30 days of the notice results in the political officer not receiving compensation until in compliance with the law. A political officer includes the Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, State Auditor, and any member of the General Assembly; and the principal administrative or deputy officers or assistants serving the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, State Auditor and Attorney General.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill regulates the ethical behavior of professionals engaged in political activities.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Richard.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say they want to make sure the law is clear so individuals and entities are able to follow the law completely and accurately. This bill cleans up the language on group expenditures.

Testifying on the bill was Missouri Society of Governmental Consultants.