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This bill changes the law regarding ethics and lobbying. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Requires full time, paid employees of statewide elected officials who work to influence legislation, certain state or political subdivision employees who receive additional compensation for political activities not related to their official duties, and staff members of the General Assembly to file personal financial statements (Section 105.483, RSMo);

(2) Adds additional criteria to the financial interest statement for those individuals required to file with the Missouri Ethics Commission including specified information for each limited liability company that the individual had an interest, the total liability owed to any creditor which exceeds \$10,000, certain income received and file an additional financial interest statement annually not later than June 30. The statement must cover the period including January 1 until May 31, immediately preceding the filing date (Section 105.485);

(3) Creates new filing deadlines for filing financial interest statements by statewide elected officials and members of the General Assembly who shall now file twice per year as specified in the bill (Section 105.487);

(4) Allows an extension of up to 120 days for additional service as a member of the Missouri Ethics Commission in cases where there are already vacancies on the commission and allows the commission to conduct certain types of specified investigations and issue subpoenas (Section 105.955);

(5) Creates the Missouri Ethics Commission Enforcement Fund which must be used solely to fund authorized activities of the Missouri Ethics Commission and consists of 50% of specified fees and penalties imposed by the commission excluding any monies reserved to the schools by the Constitution of Missouri. All funds in the Missouri Ethics Commission Enforcement Fund must be deemed additional funding to allow the commission to fulfill the duties required of the commission by state law, and no amount appropriated to the commission for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2015, will be reduced below the appropriation made for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2015. The fund may be used to pay for information used in ethics investigations under specified circumstances (Sections 105.955 and 105.957);

(6) Prohibits candidates from using their candidacy as a sham to conceal the name of another candidate or to divide the opposition and requires the signature of an affidavit to that effect for primary elections (Section 115.349);

(7) Prohibits giving, lending, agreeing to give or lend, offering, promising, or endeavoring to procure any money or valuable consideration with the intent of inducing any individual to run for any office in this state if the individual has a name that is identical or similar to another candidate for the same elective public office and would not otherwise run for elective public office but for the inducement. Campaign donations made in accordance with the laws of this state must not be construed to be an inducement (Section 115.365);

(8) Changes the crime of obstruction of an ethics investigation from a class A misdemeanor to a class D felony and then to the new class E felony classification beginning in 2017 (Section 575.021); and

(9) Includes the following individuals under the definition of "public governmental bodies" for purposes of Chapter 610, RSMo, commonly known as the Sunshine Law: any public official, statewide elected official, or employee of the state and its agencies when the individuals are operating in their official capacities and using state-funded equipment for their official communications. This rule must be construed to apply to individual members of the General Assembly and the staff or employees of the members (Section 610.010).

This bill becomes effective January 1, 2017.

This bill is the same as HB 304 (2015).