GENERAL STATUTORY IMPLEMENTATION

OVERVIEW

In calendar year 2016, the Commission said farewell to Commissioners Paul M. Vettori and Thomas B. Smyth, M.D. and welcomed new Commissioners James R. Benjamin, Jr. and Craig D. Roswell. The Commission met 6 times in regularly scheduled sessions. During its meetings, the Commission considered issues related to all areas of its statutory mandate: financial disclosure, conflict of interest, lobbyist disclosure and conduct restrictions, local government ethics laws, school board ethics regulations, advisory opinions, enforcement matters, employee training, lobbyist training and public information activities.

The State Ethics Commission, as directed in General Provisions Article § 5-205, administers the provisions of the Public Ethics Law; creates and provides forms for each document required by the Public Ethics Law; retains as a public record each document filed with the Commission for at least four years after receipt; periodically reviews the adequacy of public ethics laws; reviews financial disclosure statements and lobbyist activity reports filed in accordance with the Public Ethics Law and notifies the filers of any identified omissions or deficiencies; and publishes information that explains the provisions of the Law.

ADVICE ACTIVITIES

The State Ethics Commission is responsible for interpreting the Public Ethics Law. Sections 5-301 through 5-303 of the Public Ethics Law authorize the State Ethics Commission to issue formal advisory opinions in response to requests from officials, employees, lobbyists, and others who are subject to the Public Ethics Law. Formal opinions generally follow an appearance before the Commission by the requestor, are published in the Maryland Register, and are accessible electronically through the Division of State Documents in COMAR Title 19A. Section 5-301 of the Public Ethics Law and the Commission’s regulations in COMAR 19A.01.02.05 also authorize the staff and the Commission to provide informal advice. The Commission and its staff provide informal advice in many forms, including letters, emails, and phone calls.

During its thirty-eight years of existence, the Commission has issued 500 formal opinions. These opinions not only advise the public of the Commission’s interpretation of the Public Ethics Law, but also guide the Commission and its staff in providing informal advice. In light of this large body of interpretive decisions, in recent years the Commission and its staff primarily have provided advice informally. This process allows the Commission and its staff to deliver more timely advice, which has been important in light of the steady increase in advice requests. There were no formal opinions issued in 2016, continuing a trend that has seen no formal opinions issued since 2012.

The Commission’s informal docket, initiated in 2002, logs requests for informal advice submitted to the staff or Commission. The docket captures more complex matters (requiring research, consultation with other staff members, etc.) which come to the staff’s attention by way of letters, telephone calls, email or “walk in” requests for advice. The Commission and its staff provided informal advice in the following subject areas during calendar years 2014 through 2016:
The number of informal matters addressed in 2016, while lower than 2015, was higher than the 2014 number, and each of the 2014, 2015 and 2016 numbers continue to be well above the numbers experienced in previous years. The Commission staff has worked hard to encourage employees and officials to take a proactive approach to dealing with ethics matters, preferring to address issues before they become enforcement matters. As the above table indicates, the largest number of matters addressed dealt with State employees seeking outside or secondary employment. The chart below shows the distribution of secondary employment advice requests by agency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT MATTER OF THE ADVICE</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lobbying Registration, Reporting and Conduct</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Employment Advice</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation Advice</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Employment Advice</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift Questions</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Financial Interest, Prestige, Procurement, and Freedom of Information)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>471</strong></td>
<td><strong>503</strong></td>
<td><strong>467</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 35 “other agency” secondary employment requests came from 13 different State agencies.

The informal docket does not include routine advice on matters that the Commission’s Executive Director, General Counsel, Assistant General Counsel, and Staff Counsel are able to immediately resolve through telephone calls, emails, and in-person discussions on a daily basis. It also does not include the Commission staff assisting individuals with electronic filing or training or other general inquiries concerning the Public Ethics Law and access to public information.
The Public-Private Partnership Act, which is codified in § 5-525 of the Public Ethics Law, allows the University System of Maryland (USM) to grant to present and former university officials or employees, and under certain circumstances to specific officials (designated as a chancellor, vice chancellor, president or vice president of a public senior higher educational institution) exemptions from certain of the conflict of interest provisions of the Public Ethics Law when engaged in research or development activities. Research or development is defined to include the development or marketing of university-owned technology, the acquisition of services of an official or employee by an entity for research and development purposes, or participation in State economic development programs. The exemption does not extend to the Ethics Law’s gift and prestige of office restrictions. The institution granting the exemption is required to have adopted procedures conforming to the requirements of the Ethics Law, to maintain the exemption as a public record, and to file a copy with the State Ethics Commission.

The Law requires each governing board to report quarterly to the Governor, the Legislative Policy Committee of the General Assembly and the State Ethics Commission the number of exemptions approved. Records filed by the institutions with the Commission reflect a total of 488 faculty exemptions granted by the university presidents between 1996 and 2015. During calendar year 2016, USM institutions reported an additional 44 individual faculty member exemptions to the Commission. The 2016 exemptions were from the following institutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>Number of Exemptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland Baltimore</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland Baltimore County</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland Center for Environmental Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland College Park</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland University College</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL FACULTY EXEMPTIONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

The financial disclosure program continued to identify individual employees and officials required to file, provide technical assistance to filers, and monitor compliance with the Law. In accord with Public Ethics Law § 5-103, the Commission reviewed a significant number of requests by various agencies to add positions to or delete positions from the financial disclosure filing list. The net result was an increase in the number of filers from approximately 15,566 in 2015 to 15,989 in 2016.

Pursuant to Public Ethics Law §§ 5-103 and 5-209, the Commission made decisions regarding whether or not newly created boards and commissions met the Ethics Law’s definition of “executive unit”. These determinations are significant because members of executive units are subject to the Public Ethics Law, including both the conflict of interest and financial disclosure filing requirements. The Commission also considered and acted upon requests by a number of boards and commissions for exemptions from the requirement to file financial disclosure statements. The Commission continues to see a substantial increase in the number of boards, commissions, task forces, and technical advisory groups created by the General Assembly.

The basic financial disclosure statement filed by most individuals who are determined to be public officials is referred to as Form #1. Individuals who are public officials only as the result of their participation on boards or commissions are required to file a limited financial disclosure statement (Form #2). Legislators are required to file a more extensive disclosure statement (Form #19). The Commission staff conducts compliance reviews of financial disclosure statements and notifies filers of identifiable errors or omissions, and it pursues enforcement actions against those who fail to file. During 2016, the Commission staff reviewed over 14,300 financial disclosure statements.

The electronic administrative tool permits the staff to quickly review electronically submitted statements, compare them to previously filed electronic statements, notify filers by email of any omissions or questions raised by the statements and maintain copies of those notifications in the filers’ electronic records. The emails become attached to the electronic files, and a record is therefore compiled of statements, inquiries and responses. Filers may also electronically file amendments if required. Communication with filers, for the most part, is through email, which also saves the Commission substantial supply and postage costs.

LOBBYIST DISCLOSURE AND REGULATION

The lobbying year runs from November 1st to October 31st of the following year. The Public Ethics Law requires a regulated lobbyist to register separately for each entity that engages the regulated lobbyist for lobbying purposes. During the lobbying year ending October 31, 2016, 3,403 lobbying registrations were filed with the Commission. Those registrations were submitted by 697 lobbyists on behalf of 1,517 employers. This represents an increase of 51 registrations from the 3,352 filed by October 31, 2015.

The following table summarizes lobbying expenditures for the last three lobbying years:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Expenditure</th>
<th>10/31/2016 $</th>
<th>10/31/2015 $</th>
<th>10/31/2014 $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B-1: Meals and beverages for officials or employees or their immediate families.</td>
<td>19,746</td>
<td>20,510</td>
<td>3,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-2: Special events, including parties, dinners, athletic events, entertainment,</td>
<td>1,797,761</td>
<td>2,271,694</td>
<td>1,895,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and other functions to which all members of the General Assembly, either house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thereof, or any standing committee thereof were invited.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-3: Food, lodging, and scheduled entertainment of officials and employees and</td>
<td>35,102</td>
<td>33,291</td>
<td>9,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spouses for a meeting given in return for participation in a panel or speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engagement at the meeting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-4: Food and beverages at approved legislative organizational meetings.</td>
<td>6,461</td>
<td>1,186</td>
<td>3,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-5: Tickets or free admission to attend charitable, cultural or political events</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>3,195</td>
<td>23,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where all members of a legislative unit are invited.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-6: Gifts to or for officials or employees or their immediate families (not</td>
<td>9,557</td>
<td>9,517</td>
<td>7,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>included on B-1 through B-5).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL OF ITEMS B-1 THROUGH B-6</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,868,627</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,339,393</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,942,772</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 While the 2016 entry of $.00 is unusual, the Commission notes that the 2015 entry for item B-5 was also low. The Commission believes the best explanation is that costs of tickets and free admission are often tied to events described in categories B-1 and B-2 and incorporated as part of those costs rather than broken out individually in B-5. The Commission has no basis to suspect costs associated with tickets or free admissions are not being included in the total expenses reported by regulated lobbyists.
EXPENDITURES REPORTED BY LOBBYISTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Expenditure</th>
<th>10/31/2016</th>
<th>10/31/2015</th>
<th>10/31/2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B-7: Total compensation paid to registrant (not including sums reported in any other section).</td>
<td>50,272,165</td>
<td>46,450,540</td>
<td>43,962,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-8: Salaries, compensation and reimbursed expenses for staff of the registrant.</td>
<td>987,629</td>
<td>917,314</td>
<td>1,248,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-9: Office expenses not reported in B-7 or B-8.</td>
<td>661,486</td>
<td>828,067</td>
<td>723,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-10: Cost of professional and technical research and assistance not reported in items B-7 or B-8.</td>
<td>360,062</td>
<td>176,991</td>
<td>585,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-11: Cost of publications which expressly encourage persons to communicate with officials or employees.</td>
<td>420,135</td>
<td>460,118</td>
<td>281,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-12: Fees and expenses paid to witnesses.</td>
<td>4,865</td>
<td>1,775</td>
<td>49,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-13: Other expenses.</td>
<td>560,483</td>
<td>538,903</td>
<td>578,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL OF ITEMS B-1 THROUGH B-13</strong></td>
<td><strong>$55,135,452</strong></td>
<td><strong>$51,713,101</strong></td>
<td><strong>$49,371,313</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

There are two types of complaints, as that term is used in the Public Ethics Law and the Commission’s regulations. The Public Ethics Law provides that any person may file a complaint with the Commission. Complaints filed with the Commission must be signed under oath and allege a violation of the Public Ethics Law by a person subject to the law. In addition, following investigation of independently obtained information, the Commission may issue a complaint on its own motion alleging Public Ethics Law violations. Enforcement inquiries and reviews are conducted by the Commission’s Staff Counsel, with the assistance of two paralegals and a compliance officer. In 2016, Staff Counsel was also assisted by 3 interns.

The term “preliminary matters” describes those matters that have not yet reached the complaint stage. The Commission’s enforcement procedures divide preliminary matters into two categories. All new matters are docketed as Preliminary Consideration Matters (A matters) and presented to the Commission for review to determine whether the matter merits staff inquiry or follow-up. Cases where the Commission determines that investigation is warranted are designated Preliminary Inquiry Matters (B matters).
In 2016, the Commission opened 37 A matters (Preliminary Consideration), including 19 conflict of interest matters, 8 lobbyist matters, 7 financial disclosure matters, 2 training matters and 1 non-jurisdictional matter.

The Commission entered into 6 Late Filing Agreements with lobbyists during 2016, resulting in payments of $2,900 to the Fair Campaign Finance Fund. The Commission closed 36 A matters in 2016, and no matters were carried over from 2015. (Note that at this preliminary stage, allegations of ethics violations against multiple parties may be grouped as a single matter; e.g. late filed lobbyist reports.)

The Commission opened 6 B matters (Preliminary Inquiry Matters) in 2016. All 6 involved conflicts of interest. In 2016, the Commission also closed 6 B Matters, including 1 matter carried over from 2015. The Commission issued a reprimand, through a Pre-Complaint Disposition Agreement, to an employee of the Prince George's County Health Department for receiving a one-time payment as additional compensation to his State pay for performing additional duties to his State job. The employee acknowledged that the acceptance of the payment violated the provision of the Public Ethics Law that prohibits outside employment by employees with entities that do business with their unit of State government. As part of the Agreement, the employee paid $2,500. The Commission issued a reprimand, through a Pre-Complaint Disposition Agreement, to an employee of the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore who violated the participation provision of the Public Ethics Law by awarding textbook scholarships to his spouse. As part of the Agreement, the employee agreed to pay $1,344.42, the amount of the scholarships received, to the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore by no later than February 17, 2017.

In calendar year 2016, the Commission issued 98 complaints, including complaints in 96 financial disclosure matters, 1 conflict of interest matter, and 1 lobbying matter. The Commission issued a reprimand to the State’s Attorney for Cecil County, through a Stipulation of Settlement Agreement, for violating the participation restrictions by hiring his son and participating in personnel matters regarding his son's employment. As part of the Agreement, the State’s Attorney agreed to pay $1,500 by no later than February 1, 2017. The Commission issued a reprimand, through a Stipulation of Settlement Agreement, to a member of the House of Delegates for failure to timely file his 2014 Financial Disclosure Statement. As part of the Agreement, the member paid $100. The Commission approved a Stipulation of Settlement Agreement with an employee of the State Highway Administration for failure to timely file his 2015 Financial Disclosure Statement. As part of the Agreement, the employee paid $375. The Commission issued a reprimand, through a Stipulation of Settlement Agreement, to an employee of the Office of the Public Defender for failure to timely file his 2015 Financial Disclosure Statement. As part of the Agreement, the employee paid $110. The Commission closed 87 complaints in 2016, including 5 matters from 2015.

Aside from the monies payable to the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, all other enforcement payments were deposited in the Fair Campaign Finance Fund and cannot be used by the Commission. The Commission assessed a total of $8,829.42 in enforcement penalties in 2016.

In 2015, the Commission authorized the Staff Counsel to conduct a Lobbyist Activity Report Audit during the 2016 calendar year. Following the successful audits of 20 Lobbyist Activity Reports that were filed for the period of November 1, 2015 to April 30, 2016, the Commission approved Staff Counsel’s request that the audits occur annually. The Public Ethics Law requires that lobbyists report compensation and other expenditures by filing Activity Reports. Gen’l. Prov. § 5-705. The Commission is required to review each report filed with it in accordance with the lobbying provisions of the Public Ethics
Law. Gen’l. Prov. § 5-205(a)(5)(i). Lobbyists must retain each “…account, bill, receipt, book, paper, or other document[s] necessary to substantiate…” their Activity Reports and affiliated reports for 3 years after the reports are filed. Gen’l. Prov. § 5-409(a-b). Each lobbyist, with reasonable notice from the Commission, shall make those documents available to the Commission for inspection. Gen’l. Prov. § 5-409(c). This last section provides the Commission with the authority to audit Activity Reports and other associated reports by inspecting supporting documentation. Lobbyists will be advised that the audits will be occurring and of the documentation they will be required to provide if they are selected for an audit. After Activity Reports for the period of November 1, 2016 to April 30, 2017 are filed, the Commission staff will randomly select no less than 30 Lobbyists and meet with them to review the documentation which supports their reports. Staff Counsel will then ask the Lobbyists to provide any necessary amendments. Lobbyists who fail to respond to the audit will be subject to enforcement action.2

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICS LAWS

The Public Ethics Law charges the Commission with ensuring that local governments and school boards implement laws/regulations consistent with the requirements imposed on them in the State law. The Commission, however, has no role in administering those laws/regulations once it determines they are in compliance with the State’s requirements. That responsibility belongs to the local governments and school boards.

During 2016, the Commission’s Executive Director, General Counsel, and Assistant General Counsel participated in numerous phone discussions with county and local ethics officials, as well as their representative associations. The conversations addressed questions relating to conflicts of interest, financial disclosure and lobbying and the adoption of local laws/regulations to ensure compliance with enhanced requirements imposed on elected local officials and school board members by the General Assembly in legislation enacted in 2010. The Commission received thirty-one new written requests for advice from local governments and boards of education and staff continued its review of the ethics ordinances and policies of local governments and boards of education for compliance with the Public Ethics Law and the Commission’s regulations. The Commission staff continued to work with several jurisdictions that previously submitted draft laws in 2014, but had not yet received Commission approval. In 2016, the Commission approved draft ordinances or revisions to previously approved local ethics ordinances from five counties and seven municipalities. The Commission has approved ethics policies from all twenty-four boards of education. While local governments must submit to the Commission an annual certification of compliance, the Ethics Law contains no such certification requirement for local boards of education.

2 The primary purpose of the audits, which are performed on randomly-selected lobbyists, is to confirm that the information reported by them is accurate and supported by the records they maintain. The random nature of the process, which is conveyed to all lobbyists in advance, encourages them to ensure accuracy in the information they provide and to maintain the proper documentation to support their reports.
The Public Ethics Law and the Commission’s regulations authorize the Commission to exempt a municipality from the requirement to adopt an ethics law, or to modify the provisions applicable to a municipality, if the Commission determines an exemption or modification to be warranted based upon the size of the municipality. Commission regulations (19A.04.03.03) require the Commission to review the status of all municipal exemptions and modifications at the end of each decennial census to determine if those that were previously granted are still appropriate. The review for the 2010 census was undertaken at the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014. No additional exemptions/modifications were granted in 2016.

The Commission issued four Public Notices for noncompliance with the requirements of Subtitle 8 of the Public Ethics Law to local jurisdictions in 2015 and one additional Public Notice in 2016. Public Notices are posted on the Commission’s website at http://ethics.maryland.gov/local-government-public-notices/ and set forth the issues for each jurisdiction related to noncompliance with the State requirements. Public Notices currently exist for Carroll County, the City of Gaithersburg, the Town of Hampstead, the Town of Mount Airy and the City of Westminster.

Finally, the Commission also received and reviewed four reports from Montgomery County and three reports from Prince George’s County regarding the special land use ethics disclosure reports required in those jurisdictions (See §5-833 through §5-845).

EDUCATIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Commission staff has been active in providing formal training to State employees, lobbyists and local jurisdictions. The training has involved advising and assisting employees, officials, candidates and lobbyists on completion of forms, and providing training related to the conflict of interest provisions of the Public Ethics Law. The Commission staff has assisted local government and school board officials in drafting their ethics laws and regulations and provided technical advice to local government ethics commissions.

The Public Ethics Law requires new financial disclosure filers (i.e. public officials) to receive 2 hours of Ethics Law training (§ 5-205(d)) within 6 months of becoming filers. A total of 1,110 public officials and state employees took the conflicts of interest training online during calendar year 2016.

In addition to the basic training provided to new financial disclosure filers, the staff regularly responds to requests from various State entities for general ethics training and other, specifically focused training. The staff conducted 6 general ethics training programs for agencies, boards and commissions, attended by 107 State employees and public officials, addressing conflicts of interest and the financial disclosure requirements. The Commission staff also conducted 42 training sessions addressing conflict of interest and procurement issues attended by an additional 1,117 State employees, public officials, members of the public and special interest groups. The total number of individuals who attended general ethics and conflict of interest training was 1,224.

In accordance with § 5-205(e) of the Public Ethics Law, which requires the State Ethics Commission to provide a training course for regulated lobbyists and prospective regulated lobbyists at least twice each year, the Commission staff conducted 4 lobbying training programs attended by 26 regulated lobbyists. In addition, a total of 249 regulated lobbyists took the mandated training online during calendar year 2016.
The lobbying training focuses on electronic filing, the general lobbying conduct prohibitions in the Law, and reporting requirements.

The State Ethics Commission has become increasingly reliant on its website. The Commission’s home page allows users to access the Commission’s Annual Reports, special explanatory memoranda, and other information. The Commission’s electronic filing for lobbyists and financial disclosure filers may be accessed from the website, and all Commission forms may be downloaded from the home page. In 2016 the Commission introduced a significantly upgraded “public search” option that allows the user, through the Commission’s website, to search for and sort the information reported by lobbyists regarding their registrations and expenditures.

2016 LEGISLATION REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

The State Ethics Commission proposed no departmental bills for the 2016 Session of the General Assembly. One bill initiated in the General Assembly and subsequently enacted was strongly supported by the Commission. The bill, Senate Bill 395 (Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2016), made clear that the State Ethics Commission is the entity empowered to grant counties, municipalities and school boards modifications to the conflict of interest and financial disclosure provisions in their ethics laws or regulations.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO CONFLICT OF INTEREST PROVISIONS

The Commission has reviewed the conflict of interest provisions of the Public Ethics Law and suggests that the General Assembly consider the following issues:

- Like legislators, legislative staff should be prohibited from lobbying for one legislative session after leaving their State employment.

- The law prohibiting misuse of confidential information by current officials and employees should be extended to include the misuse of confidential information acquired during State service by former officials and employees.

- The provisions relating to honoraria should be amended to clearly identify the types of honoraria that may be accepted, as well as the circumstances under which honoraria may be accepted.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO LOBBYING PROVISIONS

The Commission supports modifying the lobbying provisions of the Public Ethics Law in the following manner:
• Section 5-709 requires lobbyists to report the total cost of a meal or reception to which all members of a legislative unit are invited. The current requirement may inadvertently inflate the actual amount spent on lobbying legislators when both legislators and non-legislators are invited. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly amend this provision by limiting the reporting requirement to the costs associated with the legislative invitees only.

• Section 5-704 permits a regulated lobbyist to file a registration form with the Commission electronically, but does not mandate electronic filing. The Commission also provides an electronic filing system which permits, but does not mandate, the filing of lobbyist activity reports pursuant to § 5-705. Electronic filing of registration forms and activity reports is quick, easy, avoids delays in the registration and reporting processes, and eliminates the requirement for a Commission staff member to manually input the information into the Commission’s database (which is necessary when reports are filed on paper so the information is available for viewing in the public records portion of the Commission’s website). Data entry by Commission staff adds an extra layer to the process which also increases the possibility of error. The Commission recommends legislation to require electronic filing of registration forms and activity reports, as was enacted in 2014 in the case of financial disclosure reports.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE PROVISIONS

None at this time.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS

The Commission and its staff continually review the Public Ethics Law in order to determine if the administration and enforcement are consistent with the intent of the law and the mission of the Commission.

• The Law currently authorizes the Commission to impose a fine not exceeding $5,000 for each violation of the Public Ethics Law by a regulated lobbyist. However, with respect to State employees and public officials, the Commission must request a court to assess fines of $5,000 per violation. Providing the Commission with authority to directly assess civil penalties against State employees and public officials would offer a formal alternative to expensive and extended court proceedings and would give the Commission equal authority in setting sanctions on conflict of interest and financial disclosure issues as it presently has with regard to lobbying violations. All fines assessed by the court are sent to the General Fund. Penalties, fines, and fees assessed by the Commission are paid to the Fair Campaign Financing Fund.
APPENDIX A

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION MEMBERS – 1979 TO PRESENT

* Herbert J. Belgrad 1979 to 1986
  William B. Calvert 1979 to 1980
  Jervis S. Finney 1979 to 1983
  Reverend John Wesley Holland 1979 to 1987
* Barbara M. Steckel 1979 to 1990
  Betty B. Nelson 1981 to 1988
* Thomas D. Washburne 1984 to 1986
* M. Peter Moser 1987 to 1989
* William J. Evans 1987 to 1993
  Reverend C. Anthony Muse 1988 to 1990
  Robert C. Rice, Ph.D. 1989 to 1993
* Mark C. Medairy, Jr. 1990 to 1999
  Mary M. Thompson 1990 to 1994
  Shirley P. Hill 1992 to 1994
* Michael L. May 1993 to 2003
  Robert J. Romadka 1994 to 1997
  April E. Sepulveda 1994 to 2003
* Charles O. Monk, II 1995 to 2003
* Dorothy R. Fait 1999 to 2005
  D. Bruce Poole 2000 to 2004
* Julian L. Lapides 2002 to 2014
  Ava S. Feiner, Ph.D. 2003 to 2005
* Robert F. Scholz 2003 to 2012
  Daryl D. Jones 2005 to 2006
* Janet E. McHugh 2005 to 2011 &
  2015 to present
* Paul M. Vettori 2006 to 2016
  H. Richard Duden, III 2006 to 2008
  Jacob Yosef Miliman 2008 to present
  Andrea Leahy-Fuchek 2011 to 2013
  Robert G. Blue 2012 to 2015
  Martin G. Madden 2014 to 2014
  Rachel T. McGuckian 2014 to 2015
  Kim L. Coble 2015 to present
  Thomas B. Smyth, M.D. 2015 to 2016
  James R. Benjamin, Jr. 2016 to present
  Craig D. Roswell 2016 to present

*Person served as Chair during some part
 of his/her term on the Commission.