

## **Criminal Statutes**

### **§ 14-217. Bribery of officials.**

(a) If any person holding office, or who has filed a notice of candidacy for or been nominated for such office, under the laws of this State who, except in payment of his legal salary, fees or perquisites, shall receive, or consent to receive, directly or indirectly, anything of value or personal advantage, or the promise thereof, for performing or omitting to perform any official act, which lay within the scope of his official authority and was connected with the discharge of his official and legal duties, or with the express or implied understanding that his official action, or omission to act, is to be in any degree influenced thereby, he shall be punished as a Class F felon.

(b) Indictments issued under these provisions shall specify:

- (1) The thing of value or personal advantage sought to be obtained; and
- (2) The specific act or omission sought to be obtained; and
- (3) That the act or omission sought to be obtained lay within the scope of the defendant's official authority and was connected with the discharge of his official and legal duties.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 539, s. 1207.

(d) For purposes of this section, a thing of value or personal advantage shall include a campaign contribution made or received under Article 22A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes. (1868-9, c. 176, s. 2; Code, s. 991; Rev., s. 3568; C.S., s. 4372; 1979, c. 760, s. 5; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1316, s. 47; 1981, c. 63, s. 1; c. 179, s. 14; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1050, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, ss. 1206, 1207; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2010-169, s. 3(a).)

### **§ 14-218. Offering bribes.**

If any person shall offer a bribe, whether it be accepted or not, he shall be punished as a Class F felon. (1870-1, c. 232; Code, s. 992; Rev., s. 3569; C.S., s. 4373; 1979, c. 760, s. 5; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1316, s. 47; 1981, c. 63, s. 1, c. 179, s. 14; 1993, c. 539, s. 1208; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

### **§ 14-234. Public officers or employees benefiting from public contracts; exceptions.**

- (a)
- (1) No public officer or employee who is involved in making or administering a contract on behalf of a public agency may derive a direct benefit from the contract except as provided in this section, or as otherwise allowed by law.
  - (2) A public officer or employee who will derive a direct benefit from a contract with the public agency he or she serves, but who is not involved in making or administering the contract, shall not attempt to influence any other person who is involved in making or administering the contract.
  - (3) No public officer or employee may solicit or receive any gift, favor, reward, service, or promise of reward, including a promise of future employment, in exchange for recommending, influencing, or attempting to influence the award of a contract by the public agency he or she serves.

(a1) For purposes of this section:

- (1) As used in this section, the term "public officer" means an individual who is elected or appointed to serve or represent a public agency, other than an employee or independent contractor of a public agency.

- (2) A public officer or employee is involved in administering a contract if he or she oversees the performance of the contract or has authority to make decisions regarding the contract or to interpret the contract.
  - (3) A public officer or employee is involved in making a contract if he or she participates in the development of specifications or terms or in the preparation or award of the contract. A public officer is also involved in making a contract if the board, commission, or other body of which he or she is a member takes action on the contract, whether or not the public officer actually participates in that action, unless the contract is approved under an exception to this section under which the public officer is allowed to benefit and is prohibited from voting.
  - (4) A public officer or employee derives a direct benefit from a contract if the person or his or her spouse: (i) has more than a ten percent (10%) ownership or other interest in an entity that is a party to the contract; (ii) derives any income or commission directly from the contract; or (iii) acquires property under the contract.
  - (5) A public officer or employee is not involved in making or administering a contract solely because of the performance of ministerial duties related to the contract.
- (b) Subdivision (a)(1) of this section does not apply to any of the following:
- (1) Any contract between a public agency and a bank, banking institution, savings and loan association, or with a public utility regulated under the provisions of Chapter 62 of the General Statutes.
  - (2) An interest in property conveyed by an officer or employee of a public agency under a judgment, including a consent judgment, entered by a superior court judge in a condemnation proceeding initiated by the public agency.
  - (3) Any employment relationship between a public agency and the spouse of a public officer of the agency.
  - (4) Remuneration from a public agency for services, facilities, or supplies furnished directly to needy individuals by a public officer or employee of the agency under any program of direct public assistance being rendered under the laws of this State or the United States to needy persons administered in whole or in part by the agency if: (i) the programs of public assistance to needy persons are open to general participation on a nondiscriminatory basis to the practitioners of any given profession, professions or occupation; (ii) neither the agency nor any of its employees or agents, have control over who, among licensed or qualified providers, shall be selected by the beneficiaries of the assistance; (iii) the remuneration for the services, facilities or supplies are in the same amount as would be paid to any other provider; and (iv) although the public officer or employee may participate in making determinations of eligibility of needy persons to receive the assistance, he or she takes no part in approving his or her own bill or claim for remuneration.
- (b1) No public officer who will derive a direct benefit from a contract entered into under subsection (b) of this section may deliberate or vote on the contract or attempt to influence any other person who is involved in making or administering the contract.
- (c) through (d) Repealed by Session Laws 2001-409, s. 1, effective July 1, 2002.
- (d1) Subdivision (a)(1) of this section does not apply to (i) any elected official or person appointed to fill an elective office of a village, town, or city having a population of no more than 15,000 according to the most recent official federal census, (ii) any elected official or person appointed to fill an elective office of a county within which there is located no village, town, or city with a population of more than 15,000 according to the most recent official federal census, (iii) any elected official or person appointed to fill an elective office on a city board of education in a city having a population of no more than 15,000 according to the most recent official federal census, (iv) any elected official or person appointed to fill an

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elective office as a member of a county board of education in a county within which there is located no village, town or city with a population of more than 15,000 according to the most recent official federal census, (v) any physician, pharmacist, dentist, optometrist, veterinarian, or nurse appointed to a county social services board, local health board, or area mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse board serving one or more counties within which there is located no village, town, or city with a population of more than 15,000 according to the most recent official federal census, and (vi) any member of the board of directors of a public hospital if all of the following apply:

- (1) The undertaking or contract or series of undertakings or contracts between the village, town, city, county, county social services board, county or city board of education, local health board or area mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse board, or public hospital and one of its officials is approved by specific resolution of the governing body adopted in an open and public meeting, and recorded in its minutes and the amount does not exceed twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) for medically related services and forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) for other goods or services within a 12-month period.
- (2) The official entering into the contract with the unit or agency does not participate in any way or vote.
- (3) The total annual amount of contracts with each official, shall be specifically noted in the audited annual financial statement of the village, town, city, or county.
- (4) The governing board of any village, town, city, county, county social services board, county or city board of education, local health board, area mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse board, or public hospital which contracts with any of the officials of their governmental unit shall post in a conspicuous place in its village, town, or city hall, or courthouse, as the case may be, a list of all such officials with whom such contracts have been made, briefly describing the subject matter of the undertakings or contracts and showing their total amounts; this list shall cover the preceding 12 months and shall be brought up-to-date at least quarterly.

(d2) Subsection (d1) of this section does not apply to contracts that are subject to Article 8 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes, Public Building Contracts.

(d3) Subsection (a) of this section does not apply to an application for or the receipt of a grant under the Agriculture Cost Share Program for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control created pursuant to Article 72 of Chapter 106 of the General Statutes, the Community Conservation Assistance Program created pursuant to Article 73 of Chapter 106 of the General Statutes, or the Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program created pursuant to Article 5 of Chapter 139 of the General Statutes by a member of the Soil and Water Conservation Commission if the requirements of G.S. 139-4(e) are met, and does not apply to a district supervisor of a soil and water conservation district if the requirements of G.S. 139-8(b) are met.

(d4) Subsection (a) of this section does not apply to an application for, or the receipt of a grant or other financial assistance from, the Tobacco Trust Fund created under Article 75 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes by a member of the Tobacco Trust Fund Commission or an entity in which a member of the Commission has an interest provided that the requirements of G.S. 143-717(h) are met.

(d5) This section does not apply to a public hospital subject to G.S. 131E-14.2 or a public hospital authority subject to G.S. 131E-21.

(d6) This section does not apply to employment contracts between the State Board of Education and its chief executive officer.

(e) Anyone violating this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(f) A contract entered into in violation of this section is void. A contract that is void under this section may continue in effect until an alternative can be arranged when: (i) immediate termination would

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result in harm to the public health or welfare, and (ii) the continuation is approved as provided in this subsection. A public agency that is a party to the contract may request approval to continue contracts under this subsection as follows:

- (1) Local governments, as defined in G.S. 159-7(15), public authorities, as defined in G.S. 159-7(10), local school administrative units, and community colleges may request approval from the chair of the Local Government Commission.
- (2) All other public agencies may request approval from the State Director of the Budget.

Approval of continuation of contracts under this subsection shall be given for the minimum period necessary to protect the public health or welfare. (1825, c. 1269, P.R.; 1826, c. 29; R.C., c. 34, s. 38; Code, s. 1011; Rev., s. 3572; C.S., s. 4388; 1929, c. 19, s. 1; 1969, c. 1027; 1975, c. 409; 1977, cc. 240, 761; 1979, c. 720; 1981, c. 103, ss. 1, 2, 5; 1983, c. 544, ss. 1, 2; 1985, c. 190; 1987, c. 570; 1989, c. 231; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1030, s. 5; 1993, c. 539, s. 145; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1995, c. 519, s. 4; 2000-147, s. 6; 2001-409, s. 1; 2001-487, ss. 44(a), 44(b), 45; 2002-159, s. 28; 2006-78, s. 2; 2009-2, s. 2; 2009-226, s. 1; 2010-169, s. 2(a); 2011-145, ss. 13.22A(dd), 13.23(b).)

## **State Government Ethics Act**

### **§ 138A-2. Purpose.**

The purpose of this Chapter is to ensure that elected and appointed State agency officials exercise their authority honestly and fairly, free from impropriety, threats, favoritism, and undue influence. To this end, it is the intent of the General Assembly in this Chapter to ensure that standards of ethical conduct and standards regarding conflicts of interest are clearly established for elected and appointed State agency officials, that the State continually educates these officials on matters of ethical conduct and conflicts of interest, that potential and actual conflicts of interests are identified and resolved, and that violations of standards of ethical conduct and conflicts of interest are investigated and properly addressed. (2006-201, s. 1.)

### **Prohibition on Use of Position for Private Gain**

#### **§ 138A-31. Use of public position for private gain.**

(a) Except as permitted under G.S. 138A-38, a covered person or legislative employee shall not knowingly use the covered person's or legislative employee's public position in an official action or legislative action that will result in financial benefit to the covered person or legislative employee, a member of the covered person's or legislative employee's extended family, or business with which the covered person or legislative employee is associated. This subsection shall not apply to financial or other benefits derived by a covered person or legislative employee that the covered person or legislative employee would enjoy to an extent no greater than that which other citizens of the State would or could enjoy, or that are so remote, tenuous, insignificant, or speculative that a reasonable person would conclude under the circumstances that the covered person's or legislative employee's ability to protect the public interest and perform the covered person's or legislative employee's official duties would not be compromised. (2006-201, s. 1; 2009-549, s. 16; 2011-393, s. 1.)

#### **§ 138A-33. Other compensation.**

A public servant or legislative employee shall not solicit or receive personal financial gain, other than that received by the public servant or legislative employee from the State, or with the approval of the employing entity, for acting in the public servant's or legislative employee's

official capacity, or for advice or assistance given in the course of carrying out the public servant's or legislative employee's duties. (2006-201, s. 1.)

**§ 138A-34. Use of information for private gain.**

A public servant or legislative employee shall not use or disclose nonpublic information gained in the course of, or by reason of, the public servant's or legislative employee's official responsibilities in a way that would affect a personal financial interest of the public servant or legislative employee, a member of the public servant's or legislative employee's extended family, or a person or governmental unit with whom or business with which the public servant or legislative employee is associated. A public servant or legislative employee shall not improperly use or improperly disclose any confidential information. (2006-201, s. 1; 2008-213, s. 83.)

**Member Participation in Official Actions**

**§ 138A-36. Public servant participation in official actions.**

(a) Except as permitted by subsection (d) of this section and under G.S. 138A-38, no public servant acting in that capacity, authorized to perform an official action requiring the exercise of discretion, shall participate in an official action by the employing entity if the public servant knows the public servant or a person with which the public servant is associated may incur a reasonably foreseeable financial benefit from the matter under consideration, which financial benefit would impair the public servant's independence of judgment or from which it could reasonably be inferred that the financial benefit would influence the public servant's participation in the official action.

(b) A public servant described in subsection (a) of this section shall abstain from taking any verbal or written action in furtherance of the official action. The public servant shall submit in writing to the employing entity the reasons for the abstention. When the employing entity is a board, the abstention shall be recorded in the employing entity's minutes.

(c) A public servant shall take appropriate steps, under the particular circumstances and considering the type of proceeding involved, to remove himself or herself to the extent necessary, to protect the public interest and comply with this Chapter, from any proceeding in which the public servant's impartiality might reasonably be questioned due to the public servant's familial, personal, or financial relationship with a participant in the proceeding. A participant includes (i) an owner, shareholder, partner, member or manager of a limited liability company, employee, agent, officer, or director of a business, organization, or group involved in the proceeding, or (ii) an organization or group that has petitioned for rule making or has some specific, unique, and substantial interest in the proceeding. Proceedings include quasi-judicial proceedings and quasi-legislative proceedings. A personal relationship includes one in a leadership or policy-making position in a business, organization, or group.

(d) If a public servant is uncertain about whether the relationship described in subsection (c) of this section justifies removing the public servant from the proceeding under subsection (c) of this section, the public servant shall disclose the relationship to the individual presiding over the proceeding and seek appropriate guidance. The presiding officer, in consultation with legal counsel if necessary, shall then determine the extent to which the public servant will be permitted to participate. If the affected public servant is the individual presiding, then the vice-chair or any other substitute presiding officer shall make the determination. A good-faith determination under this subsection of the allowable degree of participation by a public servant is presumptively valid

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and only subject to review under G.S. 138A-12 upon a clear and convincing showing of mistake, fraud, abuse of discretion, or willful disregard of this Chapter.

(e) This section shall not allow participation in an official action prohibited by G.S. 14-234. (2006-201, s. 1; 2007-347, s. 12; 2007-348, s. 42; 2008-213, s. 84(a).)

**§ 138A-38. Permitted participation exception.**

(a) Notwithstanding G.S. 138A-36 and G.S. 138A-37, a covered person may participate in an official action or legislative action under any of the following circumstances except as specifically limited:

- (1) The only interest or reasonably foreseeable benefit or detriment that accrues to the covered person, the covered person's extended family, business with which the covered person is associated, or nonprofit corporation or organization with which the covered person is associated as a member of a profession, occupation, or general class is no greater than that which could reasonably be foreseen to accrue to all members of that profession, occupation, or general class.
- (2) When an official or legislative action affects or would affect the covered person's compensation and allowances as a covered person.
- (3) Before the covered person participated in the official or legislative action, the covered person requested and received from the Commission or Committee a written advisory opinion that authorized the participation. In authorizing the participation under this subdivision, the Commission or Committee shall consider the need for the legislator's particular contribution, such as special knowledge of the subject matter, to the effective functioning of the General Assembly.
- (4) Before participating in an official action, a public servant made full written disclosure to the public servant's employing entity which then made a written determination that the interest or benefit would neither impair the public servant's independence of judgment nor influence the public servant's participation in the official action. The employing entity shall file a copy of that written determination with the Commission.
- (5) When action is ministerial only and does not require the exercise of discretion.
- (6) When a public or legislative body records in its minutes that it cannot obtain a quorum in order to take the official or legislative action because the covered person is disqualified from acting under G.S. 138A-36, G.S. 138A-37, or this section, the covered person may be counted for purposes of a quorum, but shall otherwise abstain from taking any further action.
- (7) When a public servant notifies the Commission in writing that the public servant, or someone whom the public servant appoints to act in the public servant's stead, or both, are the only individuals having legal authority to take an official action, and the public servant discloses in writing the circumstances and nature of the conflict of interest.

(b) This section shall not allow participation in an official action prohibited by G.S. 14-234.

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**Member's Duties and Chairman's Role Regarding Members**

**§ 138A-35. Other rules of conduct.**

(a) A public servant shall make a due and diligent effort before taking any action, including voting or participating in discussions with other public servants on a board on which the public servant also serves, to determine whether the public servant has a conflict of interest. If the public servant is unable to determine whether or not a conflict of interest may exist, the public servant has a duty to inquire of the Commission as to that conflict.

(b) A public servant shall continually monitor, evaluate, and manage the public servant's personal, financial, and professional affairs to ensure the absence of conflicts of interest.

(c) A public servant shall obey all other civil laws, administrative requirements, and criminal statutes governing conduct of State government applicable to appointees and employees. (2006-201, s. 1.)

**§ 138A-15. Duties of heads of State agencies.**

(a) The head of each State agency, including the chair of each board subject to this Chapter, shall take an active role in furthering ethics in public service and ensuring compliance with this Chapter. The head of each State agency and the chair of each board shall make a conscientious, good-faith effort to assist public servants within the agency or on the board in monitoring their personal, financial, and professional affairs to avoid taking any action that results in a conflict of interest.

(b) The head of each State agency, including the chair of each board subject to this Chapter, shall maintain familiarity with and stay knowledgeable of the reports, opinions, newsletters, and other communications from the Commission regarding ethics in general and the interpretation and enforcement of this Chapter. The head of each State agency and the chair of each board shall also maintain familiarity with and stay knowledgeable of the Commission's reports, evaluations, opinions, or findings regarding individual public servants in that individual's agency or on that individual's board, or under that individual's supervision or control, including all reports, evaluations, opinions, or findings pertaining to actual or potential conflicts of interest.

(c) When an actual or potential conflict of interest is cited by the Commission under G.S. 138A-24(e) with regard to a public servant sitting on a board, the conflict shall be recorded in the minutes of the applicable board and duly brought to the attention of the membership by the board's chair as often as necessary to remind all members of the conflict and to help ensure compliance with this Chapter.

(d) The head of each State agency, including the chair of each board subject to this Chapter, shall periodically remind public servants under that individual's authority of the public servant's duties to the public under the ethical standards and rules of conduct in this Chapter, including the duty of each public servant to continually monitor, evaluate, and manage the public servant's personal, financial, and professional affairs to ensure the absence of conflicts of interest.

(e) At the beginning of any meeting of a board, the chair shall remind all members of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest under this Chapter. The chair also shall inquire as to whether there is any known conflict of interest with respect to any matters coming before the board at that time.

(f) The head of each State agency, including the chair of each board subject to this Chapter, shall ensure that legal counsel employed by or assigned to their agency or board are familiar with the provisions of this Chapter, including the Ethical Standards for Covered Persons set forth in Article 4 of this Chapter, and are available to advise public servants on the ethical considerations involved in carrying out their public duties in the best interest of the public. Legal counsel so engaged may consult with the Commission, seek the Commission's assistance or advice, and refer public servants and others to the Commission as appropriate.

(g) Taking into consideration the individual autonomy, needs, and circumstances of each agency and board, the head of each State agency, including the chair of each board subject to this Chapter, shall consider the need for the development and implementation of in-house educational programs, procedures, or policies tailored to meet the agency's or board's particular needs for ethics education, conflict identification, and conflict avoidance. This includes the periodic presentation to all agency heads, their chief deputies or assistants, other public servants under their supervision or control, and members of boards, of the basic ethics education and awareness presentation outlined in G.S. 138A-14 and any other workshop or seminar program the agency head or board chair deems necessary in implementing this Chapter. Agency heads and board chairs may request reasonable assistance from the Commission in complying with the requirements of this subsection.

(h) As soon as reasonably practicable after the designation, hiring, or promotion of their chief deputies, assistants, or other public servants under their supervision or control, or learning of the appointment or election of other public servants to a board covered under this Chapter, all agency heads and board chairs shall (i) notify the Commission of such designation, hiring, promotion, appointment, or election and (ii) provide these public servants with copies of this Chapter and all applicable financial disclosure forms, if these materials and forms have not been previously provided to these public servants in connection with their designation, hiring, promotion, appointment, or election. In order to avoid duplication of effort, agency heads and board chairs shall coordinate this effort with the Commission's staff. (2006-201, s. 1; 2007-347, s. 9(b); 2008-213, ss. 61, 62.)

### **Gift Ban**

#### **§ 138A-32. Gifts.**

(a) A covered person or a legislative employee shall not knowingly, directly or indirectly, ask, accept, demand, exact, solicit, seek, assign, receive, or agree to receive anything of value for the covered person or legislative employee, or for another person, in return for being influenced in the discharge of the covered person's or legislative employee's official responsibilities, other than that which is received by the covered person or the legislative employee from the State for acting in the covered person's or legislative employee's official capacity.

(b) A covered person may not solicit for a charitable purpose any thing of monetary value from any subordinate State employee. This subsection shall not apply to generic written solicitations to all members of a class of subordinates. Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit a covered person from serving as the honorary head of the State Employees Combined Campaign.

(c) No public servant, legislator, or legislative employee shall knowingly accept a gift from a lobbyist or lobbyist principal registered under Chapter 120C of the General Statutes. No legislator or legislative employee shall knowingly accept a gift from liaison personnel designated

under Chapter 120C of the General Statutes. No public servant, legislator, or legislative employee shall accept a gift knowing all of the following:

- (1) The gift was obtained indirectly from a lobbyist, lobbyist principal, or liaison personnel registered under Chapter 120C of the General Statutes.
  - (2) The lobbyist, lobbyist principal, or liaison personnel registered under Chapter 120C of the General Statutes intended for an ultimate recipient of the gift to be a public servant, legislator, or legislative employee as provided in G.S. 120C-303.
- (d) No public servant shall knowingly accept a gift from a person whom the public servant knows or has reason to know any of the following:
- (1) Is doing or is seeking to do business of any kind with the public servant's employing entity.
  - (2) Is engaged in activities that are regulated or controlled by the public servant's employing entity.
  - (3) Has financial interests that may be substantially and materially affected, in a manner distinguishable from the public generally, by the performance or nonperformance of the public servant's official duties.
- (d1) No public servant shall accept a gift knowing all of the following:
- (1) The gift was obtained indirectly from a person described under subdivision (d)(1), (2), or (3) of this section.
  - (2) The person described under subdivision (d)(1), (2), or (3) of this section intended for an ultimate recipient of the gift to be a public servant.
- (e) Subsections (c), (d), and (d1) of this section shall not apply to any of the following:
- (1) Food and beverages for immediate consumption in connection with any of the following:
    - a. An open meeting of a public body, provided that the open meeting is properly noticed under Article 33C of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.
    - b. A gathering of a person or governmental unit with at least 10 or more individuals in attendance open to the general public, provided that a sign or other communication containing a message that is reasonably designed to convey to the general public that the gathering is open to the general public is displayed at the gathering.
    - c. A gathering of a person or governmental unit to which the entire board of which a public servant is a member, at least 10 public servants, all the members of the House of Representatives, all the members of the Senate, all the members of a county or municipal legislative delegation, all the members of a recognized legislative caucus with regular meetings other than meetings with one or more lobbyists, all the members of a committee, a standing subcommittee, a joint committee or joint commission of the House of Representatives, the Senate, or the General Assembly, or all legislative employees are invited, and one of the following applies:
      1. At least 10 individuals associated with the person or governmental unit actually attend, other than the covered

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person or legislative employee, or the immediate family of the covered person or legislative employee.

2. All shareholders, employees, board members, officers, members, or subscribers of the person or governmental unit located in North Carolina are notified and invited to attend.

For purposes of this sub-subdivision only, the term "invited" shall mean written notice from at least one host or sponsor of the gathering containing the date, time, and location of the gathering given at least 24 hours in advance of the gathering to the specific qualifying group listed in this sub-subdivision. If it is known at the time of the written notice that at least one sponsor is a lobbyist or lobbyist principal, the written notice shall also state whether or not the gathering is permitted under this section.

- (2) Informational materials relevant to the duties of the covered person or legislative employee.
- (3) Reasonable actual expenditures of the legislator, public servant, or legislative employee for food, beverages, registration, travel, lodging, other incidental items of nominal value, and entertainment, in connection with (i) a legislator's, public servant's, or legislative employee's attendance at an educational meeting for purposes primarily related to the public duties and responsibilities of the legislator, public servant, or legislative employee; (ii) a legislator's, public servant's, or legislative employee's participation as a speaker or member of a panel at a meeting; (iii) a legislator's or legislative employee's attendance and participation in meetings of a nonpartisan state, regional, national, or international legislative organization of which the General Assembly is a member or that the legislator or legislative employee is a member or participant of by virtue of that legislator's or legislative employee's public position, or as a member of a board, agency, or committee of such organization; or (iv) a public servant's attendance and participation in meetings as a member of a board, agency, or committee of a nonpartisan state, regional, national, or international organization of which the public servant's agency is a member or the public servant is a member by virtue of that public servant's public position, provided the following conditions are met:
  - a. The reasonable actual expenditures shall be made by a lobbyist principal, and not a lobbyist.
  - b. Any meeting must be attended by at least 10 or more participants, have a formal agenda, and notice of the meeting has been given at least 10 days in advance.
  - c. Any food, beverages, transportation, or entertainment must be provided to all attendees or defined groups of 10 or more attendees as part of the meeting or in conjunction with the meeting.
  - d. Any entertainment must be incidental to the principal agenda of the meeting.

- e. If the legislator, public servant, or legislative employee is participating as a speaker or member of a panel, then that legislator, public servant, or legislative employee must be a bona fide speaker or participant.
- (4) A plaque or similar nonmonetary memento recognizing individual services in a field or specialty or to a charitable cause.
- (5) Gifts accepted on behalf of the State for use by the State or for the benefit of the State.
- (6) Anything generally made available or distributed to the general public or all other State employees by lobbyists or lobbyist principals, or persons described in subdivisions (d)(1), (2), or (3) of this section.
- (7) Gifts from the covered person's or legislative employee's extended family, or a member of the same household of the covered person or legislative employee.
- (8) Gifts given to a public servant not otherwise subject to an exception under this subsection, where the gift is food and beverages, transportation, lodging, entertainment or related expenses associated with the public business of industry recruitment, promotion of international trade, or the promotion of travel and tourism, and the public servant is responsible for conducting the business on behalf of the State, provided all the following conditions apply:
  - a. The public servant did not solicit the gift, and the public servant did not accept the gift in exchange for the performance of the public servant's official duties.
  - b. The public servant reports electronically to the Commission within 30 days of receipt of the gift or of the date set for disclosure of public records under G.S. 132-6(d), if applicable. The report shall include a description and value of the gift and a description how the gift contributed to the public business of industry recruitment, promotion of international trade, or the promotion of travel and tourism. This report shall be posted to the Commission's public Web site.
  - c. A tangible gift, other than food or beverages, not otherwise subject to an exception under this subsection shall be turned over as State property to the Department of Commerce within 30 days of receipt, except as permitted under subsection (f) of this section.
- (9) Gifts of personal property valued at less than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) given to a public servant in the commission of the public servant's official duties if the gift is given to the public servant as a personal gift in another country as part of an overseas trade mission, and the giving and receiving of such personal gifts is considered a customary protocol in the other country.
- (10) Gifts given or received as part of a business, civic, religious, fraternal, personal, or commercial relationship provided all of the following conditions are met:
  - a. The relationship is not related to the public servant's, legislator's, or legislative employee's public service or position.
  - b. The gift is made under circumstances that a reasonable person would conclude that the gift was not given to lobby.

- (11) Food and beverages for immediate consumption and related transportation provided all of the following conditions are met:
- a. The food, beverage, or transportation is given by a lobbyist principal and not a lobbyist.
  - b. The food, beverage, or transportation is provided during a conference, meeting, or similar event and is available to all attendees of the same class as the recipient.
  - c. The recipient of the food, beverage, or transportation is a director, officer, governing board member, employee, or independent contractor of one of the following:
    1. The lobbyist principal giving the food, beverage, or transportation.
    2. A third party that received the funds to purchase the food, beverages, or transportation.
- (12) Food and beverages for immediate consumption at an organized gathering of a person, the State, or a governmental unit to which a public servant is invited to attend for purposes primarily related to the public servant's public service or position, and to which at least 10 individuals, other than the public servant, or the public servant's immediate family, actually attend, or to which all shareholders, employees, board members, officers, members, or subscribers of the person or governmental unit who are located in a specific North Carolina office or county are notified and invited to attend.

(f) A prohibited gift that would constitute an expense appropriate for reimbursement by the public servant's employing entity if it had been incurred by the public servant personally shall be considered a gift accepted by or donated to the State, provided the public servant has been approved by the public servant's employing entity to accept or receive such things of value on behalf of the State. The fact that the employing entity's reimbursement rate for the type of expense is less than the value of a particular gift shall not render the gift prohibited.

(g) A prohibited gift shall be, and a permissible gift may be, promptly declined, returned, paid for at fair market value, or donated to charity or the State.

(h) A covered person or legislative employee shall not accept an honorarium from a source other than the employing entity for conducting any activity where any of the following apply:

- (1) The employing entity reimburses the covered person or legislative employee for travel, subsistence, and registration expenses.
- (2) The employing entity's work time or resources are used.
- (3) The activity would be considered official duty or would bear a reasonably close relationship to the covered person's or legislative employee's official duties.

An outside source may reimburse the employing entity for actual expenses incurred by a covered person or legislative employee in conducting an activity within the duties of the covered person or legislative employee, or may pay a fee to the employing entity, in lieu of an honorarium, for the services of the covered person or legislative employee. An honorarium permissible under this subsection shall not be considered a gift for purposes of subsection (c) of this section.

(i) Acceptance or solicitation of a gift in compliance with this section without corrupt intent shall not constitute a violation of the statutes related to bribery under G.S. 14-217, 14-218, or 120-86. (2006-201, s. 1; 2007-347, s. 11; 2007-348, ss. 15(b), 35-41(a); 2008-213, ss. 77(a), 78(a), 79-82, 90; 2009-549, s. 17; 2010-169, ss. 15(b), (c), 17(r).)

### **Disclosure Requirements**

#### **§ 138A-21. Purpose.**

The purpose of disclosure of the financial and personal interests by covered persons is to assist covered persons and those who appoint, elect, hire, supervise, or advise them identify and avoid conflicts of interest and potential conflicts of interest between the covered person's private interests and the covered person's public duties. It is critical to this process that current and prospective covered persons examine, evaluate, and disclose those personal and financial interests that could be or cause a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest between the covered person's private interests and the covered person's public duties. Covered persons must take an active, thorough, and conscientious role in the disclosure and review process, including having a complete knowledge of how the covered person's public position or duties might impact the covered person's private interests. Covered persons have an affirmative duty to provide any and all information that a reasonable person would conclude is necessary to carry out the purposes of this Chapter and to fully disclose any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest between the covered person's public and private interests, but the disclosure, review, and evaluation process is not intended to result in the disclosure of unnecessary or irrelevant personal information. (2006-201, s. 1; 2008-213, s. 63.)

#### **§ 138A-22. Statement of economic interest; filing required.**

(a) Every covered person subject to this Chapter who is elected, appointed, or employed, including one appointed to fill a vacancy in elective office, except for public servants (i) included under G.S. 138A-3(30)b., e., f., or g. whose annual compensation from the State is less than sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000), or (ii) who are ex officio student members under Chapters 115D and 116 of the General Statutes, shall file a statement of economic interest with the Commission prior to the covered person's initial appointment, election, or employment and no later than April 15 of every year thereafter, except as otherwise filed under subsections (c1) and (d) of this section. A prospective covered person required to file a statement under this Chapter shall not be appointed, employed, or receive a certificate of election, prior to submission by the Commission of the Commission's evaluation of the statement in accordance with this Article. The requirement for an annual filing under this subsection also shall apply to covered persons whose terms have expired but who continue to serve until the covered person's replacement is appointed. Once a statement of economic interest is properly completed and filed under this Article, the statement of economic interest does not need to be supplemented or refiled prior to the next due date set forth in this subsection.

\* \* \* \*

(c2) A public servant appointed to a board determined and designated as nonadvisory under G.S. 138A-10(a)(3) shall file the initial statement of economic interest within 60 days of notification of the designation by the Commission and as provided in this section thereafter.

(2006-201, s. 1; 2007-29, s. 2; 2007-348, ss. 32, 33; 2008-213, s. 64; 2009-549, s. 13; 2010-169, ss. 12, 22(b).)

**§ 138A-23. Statements of economic interest as public records.**

(a) The statements of economic interest filed by prospective public servants under this Article for appointed or employed positions and written evaluations by the Commission of these statements are not public records until the prospective public servant is appointed or employed by the State. All other statements of economic interest and all other written evaluations by the Commission of those statements are public records.

(b) The statements of economic interest filed by prospective public servants, and the written evaluations by the Commission of those statements, for individuals elected by the General Assembly shall be provided to the chair of the standing committee handling the legislation regarding the election and made available to all members of the General Assembly. The statements of economic interest filed by public servants elected to positions by the General Assembly, and written evaluations by the Commission of those statements, are not public records until the prospective public servant is sworn into office.

(c) The statements of economic interest filed by prospective public servants, and the written evaluations by the Commission of those statements, for individuals confirmed for appointment as a public servant by the General Assembly shall be provided to the chair of the standing committee handling the legislation regarding the appointment. The statements of economic interest filed by prospective public servants for confirmation for appointment by the General Assembly, and written evaluations by the Commission of those statements, are public records at the time of the announcement of the appointment. (2006-201, s. 1; 2007-347, s. 10; 2008-213, ss. 65, 66.)

**§ 138A-24. Contents of statement.**

(a) Any statement of economic interest filed under this Article shall be on a form prescribed by the Commission. Answers must be provided to all questions. The form shall include the following information about the filing person and the filing person's immediate family:

- (1) Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, the name, current mailing address, occupation, employer, and business of the filing person. Any individual holding or seeking elected office for which residence is a qualification for office shall include a home address. A judicial officer may use a current mailing address instead of the home address on the form required in this subsection. The filing person may also use the initials instead of the name of any unemancipated child of the filing person who also resides in the household of the filing person. If the filing person provides the initials of an unemancipated child, the filing person shall concurrently provide the name of the unemancipated child to the Commission. The name of an unemancipated child provided by the filing person to the Commission shall not be a public record under Chapter 132 of the General Statutes and is privileged and confidential.
- (2) A list of each asset and liability included in this subdivision of whatever nature (including legal, equitable, or beneficial interest) with a value of at

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least ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) owned by the filing person and the filing person's immediate family, except assets or liabilities held in a blind trust. This list shall include the following:

- a. All real estate located in the State owned wholly or in part by the filing person or the filing person's immediate family, including descriptions adequate to determine the location by city and county of each parcel.
- b. Real estate that is currently leased or rented to or from the State.
- c. Personal property sold to or bought from the State within the preceding two years.
- d. Personal property currently leased or rented to or from the State.
- e. The name of each publicly owned company. For purposes of this sub-subdivision, the term "publicly owned company" shall not include a widely held investment fund, including a mutual fund, regulated investment company, or pension or deferred compensation plan, if all of the following apply:
  1. The filing person or a member of the filing person's immediate family neither exercises nor has the ability to exercise control over the financial interests held by the fund.
  2. The fund is publicly traded, or the fund's assets are widely diversified.
- f. The name of each nonpublicly owned company or business entity, including interests in sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited partnerships, joint ventures, limited liability companies, limited liability partnerships, and closely held corporations.
- g. For each company or business entity listed under sub-subdivision f. of this subdivision, if known, a list of any other companies or business entities in which the company or business entity owns securities or equity interests exceeding a value of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).
- h. Repealed by Session Laws 2010-169, s. 13(a), effective January 1, 2011, and applicable to statements of economic interest filed on or after that date.
- i. Recodified as subdivision (a)(16) by Session Laws 2010-169, s. 13(c), effective January 1, 2011, and applicable to statements of economic interest filed on or after that date.
- j. For a vested trust created, established, or controlled by the filing person of which the filing person or the members of the filing person's immediate family are the beneficiaries, excluding a blind trust, the name and address of the trustee, a description of the trust, and the filing person's relationship to the trust.
- k. A list of all liabilities, excluding indebtedness on the filing person's primary personal residence, by type of creditor and debtor.
- l. Repealed by Session Laws 2007-348, s. 34. See Editor's note for effective date.
- m. A list of all stock options in a company or business not otherwise disclosed on this statement.

- (3) The name of each source (not specific amounts) of income of more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) received during the previous year by business or industry type, if that source is not listed under subdivision (2) of this subsection. Income shall include salary, wages, professional fees, honoraria, interest, dividends, rental income, and business income from any source other than capital gains, federal government retirement, military retirement, or social security income.
- (4) If the filing person is a practicing attorney, an indication of whether the filing person, or the law firm with which the filing person is affiliated, earned legal fees during the past year in excess of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) from any of the following categories of legal representation:
  - a. Administrative law.
  - b. Admiralty law.
  - c. Corporate law.
  - d. Criminal law.
  - e. Decedents' estates law.
  - f. Environmental law.
  - g. Insurance law.
  - h. Labor law.
  - i. Local government law.
  - j. Negligence or other tort litigation law.
  - k. Real property law.
  - l. Securities law.
  - m. Taxation law.
  - n. Utilities regulation law.
- (5) Except for a filing person in compliance under subdivision (4) of this subsection, if the filing person is a licensed professional or provides consulting services, either individually or as a member of a professional association, a list of categories of business and the nature of services rendered, for which payment for services were charged or paid during the past year in excess of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).
- (6) An indication of whether the filing person, the filing person's employer, a member of the filing person's immediate family, or the immediate family member's employer is licensed or regulated by, or has a business relationship with, the board or employing entity with which the filing person is or will be associated. This subdivision does not apply to a legislator, a judicial officer, or that legislator's or judicial officer's immediate family.
- (7) A list of societies, organizations, or advocacy groups, pertaining to subject matter areas over which the public servant's agency or board may have jurisdiction, in which the public servant or a member of the public servant's immediate family is a director, officer, or governing board member. This subdivision does not apply to a legislator, a judicial officer, or that legislator's or judicial officer's immediate family.
- (8) A list of all things with a total value of over two hundred dollars (\$200.00) per calendar quarter given and received without valuable consideration and

under circumstances that a reasonable person would conclude that the thing was given for lobbying, if such things were given by a person not required to report under Chapter 120C of the General Statutes, excluding things given by a member of the filing person's extended family. The list shall include only those things received during the 12 months preceding the reporting period under subsection (d) of this section, and shall include the source of those things. The list required by this subdivision shall not apply to things of monetary value received by the filing person prior to the time the filing person filed or was nominated as a candidate for office, as described in G.S. 138A-22, or was appointed or employed as a covered person.

- (9) A list of any felony convictions of the filing person, excluding any felony convictions for which a pardon of innocence or order of expungement has been granted.
- (10) Any other information that the filing person believes may assist the Commission in advising the filing person with regards to compliance with this Chapter.
- (11) A list of any nonprofit corporation or organization with which associated during the preceding calendar year, including a list of which of those nonprofit corporations or organizations with which associated do business with the State or receive State funds and a brief description of the nature of the business, if known or with which due diligence could reasonably be known.
- (12) A statement of whether the filing person or the filing person's immediate family is or has been a lobbyist or lobbyist principal registered under Chapter 120C of the General Statutes within the preceding 12 months.
- (13) A list of all contributions as defined in G.S. 163-278.6(6) with a cumulative total of more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) made by the filing person only, during the preceding calendar year, to the candidate or candidate campaign committee of the covered person as defined in G.S. 138A-3(30)a. appointing the filing person to the covered board.
- (14) A statement indicating "Yes" or "No" as to whether the filing person engaged in each of the following activities during the preceding calendar year, with respect to or on the behalf of the candidate or candidate campaign committee of the covered person as defined in G.S. 138A-3(30)a. appointing the filing person: (i) collected contributions from multiple contributors, took possession of such multiple contributions, and transferred or delivered those collected multiple contributions, (ii) hosted a fund-raiser in the filing person's residence or place of business, or (iii) volunteered for campaign-related activity. This subdivision only applies to filing persons in the following categories:
  - a. A public servant, or a prospective appointee to, as defined in G.S. 138A-3(30)c.
  - b. A judicial officer that serves on, or a prospective appointee to, the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, the superior court, or the district court.

- c. A covered person serving on, or a prospective appointee to, one of the following panels or boards:
  1. Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission.
  2. Coastal Resources Commission.
  3. State Board of Education.
  4. State Board of Elections.
  5. Division of Employment Security.
  6. Environmental Management Commission.
  7. Industrial Commission.
  8. State Personnel Commission.
  9. Rules Review Commission.
  10. Board of Transportation.
  11. Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina.
  12. Utilities Commission.
  13. Wildlife Resources Commission.
- (15) The name of each business with which associated that the filing person or a member of the filing person's immediate family is an employee, director, officer, partner, proprietor, or member or manager.
- (16) For any company or business entity listed under subdivision (15) of this subsection and sub-subdivisions f. and g. of subdivision (2) of this subsection, if known, a statement whether that company or business entity has any material business dealings or business contracts with the State, or is regulated by the State, including a brief description of the business activity.

\* \* \* \*

(e) The Commission shall prepare a written evaluation of each statement of economic interest relative to conflicts of interest and potential conflicts of interest. This subsection does not apply to statements of economic interest of legislators and judicial officers. The Commission shall submit the evaluation to all of the following:

- (1) The filing person who submitted the statement.
- (2) The head of the agency in which the filing person serves.
- (3) The Governor for gubernatorial appointees and employees in agencies under the Governor's authority.
- (4) Repealed by Session Laws 2008-213, s. 74, effective August 15, 2008.
- (5) The appointing or hiring authority for those public servants not under the Governor's authority.
- (6) The State Board of Elections for those filing persons who are elected.
- (7) Repealed by Session Laws 2008-213, s. 74, effective August 15, 2008.

(f) The Commission shall prepare a written evaluation of each statement of economic interest for nominees of the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina elected pursuant to G.S. 116-6, and nominees of the State Board of Community Colleges elected pursuant to G.S. 115D-2.1 within seven days of the submission of the completed statement of economic interest to the Commission. (2006-201, s. 1; 2007-29, s. 1; 2007-348, s. 34; 2008-187, s. 32; 2008-213, ss. 67-72(a), 73, 74, 74.5, 91; 2009-549, s. 14; 2009-570, s. 45; 2010-169, ss. 13(a)-(d), 17(q), 22(b); 2011-401, s. 3.18.)

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**§ 138A-25. Failure to file.**

(a) Within 30 days after the date due under G.S. 138A-22, the Commission shall notify filing persons who have failed to file or filing persons whose statement has been deemed incomplete. For a filing person currently serving as a covered person, the Commission shall notify the filing person and the ethics liaison that if the statement of economic interest is not filed or completed within 30 days of receipt of the notice of failure to file or complete, the filing person shall be subject to a fine as provided for in this section.

(b) Any filing person who fails to file or complete a statement of economic interest within 30 days of the receipt of the notice, required under subsection (a) of this section, shall be subject to a fine of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00), to be imposed by the Commission.

(c) Failure by any filing person to file or complete a statement of economic interest within 60 days of the receipt of the notice, required under subsection (a) of this section, shall be deemed to be a violation of this Chapter and shall be grounds for disciplinary action under G.S. 138A-45. (2006-201, s. 1; 2008-213, s. 75; 2009-549, s. 15.)

**§ 138A-26. Concealing or failing to disclose material information.**

A filing person who knowingly conceals or knowingly fails to disclose information that is required to be disclosed on a statement of economic interest under this Article shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and shall be subject to disciplinary action under G.S. 138A-45. (2006-201, s. 1.)

**§ 138A-27. Penalty for false information.**

A filing person who provides false information on a statement of economic interest as required under this Article knowing that the information is false is guilty of a Class H felony and shall be subject to disciplinary action under G.S. 138A-45. (2006-201, s. 1.)

**§ 138A-3. Definitions.**

The following definitions apply in this Chapter:

\* \* \* \*

- (2) Business. – Any of the following organized for profit:
  - a. Association.
  - b. Business trust.
  - c. Corporation.
  - d. Enterprise.
  - e. Joint venture.
  - f. Organization.
  - g. Partnership.
  - h. Proprietorship.
  - i. Vested trust.
  - j. Every other business interest, including ownership or use of land for income.

- (3) Business with which associated. – A business in which the covered person or filing person or any member of that covered person's or filing person's immediate family does any of the following:
- a. Is an employee.
  - b. Holds a position as a director, officer, partner, proprietor, or member or manager of a limited liability company, irrespective of the amount of compensation received or the amount of the interest owned.
  - c. Owns a legal, equitable, or beneficial interest of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or more in the business or five percent (5%) of the business, whichever is less, other than as a trustee on a deed of trust.
  - d. Is a lobbyist registered under Chapter 120C of the General Statutes.
- For purposes of this subdivision, the term "business" shall not include a widely held investment fund, including a mutual fund, regulated investment company, or pension or deferred compensation plan, if all of the following apply:
1. The covered person, filing person, or a member of the covered person's or filing person's immediate family neither exercises nor has the ability to exercise control over the financial interests held by the fund.
  2. The fund is publicly traded, or the fund's assets are widely diversified.

\* \* \* \*

- (13) Extended family. – Spouse, lineal descendant, lineal ascendant, sibling, spouse's lineal descendant, spouse's lineal ascendant, spouse's sibling, and the spouse of any of these individuals.

\* \* \* \*

- (14c) Financial benefit. – A direct pecuniary gain or loss to the legislator, the public servant, or a person with which the legislator or public servant is associated, or a direct pecuniary loss to a business competitor of the legislator, the public servant, or a person with which the legislator or public servant is associated.
- (15) Gift. – Anything of monetary value given or received without valuable consideration by or from a lobbyist, lobbyist principal, liaison personnel, or a person described under G.S. 138A-32(d)(1), (2), or (3). The following shall not be considered gifts under this subdivision:
- a. Anything for which fair market value, or face value if shown, is paid by the covered person or legislative employee.
  - b. Commercially available loans made on terms not more favorable than generally available to the general public in the normal course of business if not made for lobbying.

- c. Contractual arrangements or commercial relationships or arrangements made in the normal course of business if not made for lobbying.
- d. Academic or athletic scholarships based on the same criteria as applied to the public.
- e. Anything of value properly reported as required under Article 22A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes.
- f. Expressions of condolence related to a death of an individual, sent within a reasonable time of the death, if the expression is one of the following:
  - 1. A sympathy card, letter, or note.
  - 2. Flowers.
  - 3. Food or beverages for immediate consumption.
  - 4. Donations to a religious organization, charity, the State or a political subdivision of the State, not to exceed a total of two hundred dollars (\$200.00) per death per donor.

\* \* \* \*

- (17) Immediate family. – An unemancipated child of the covered person residing in the household and the covered person's spouse, if not legally separated. A member of a covered person's extended family shall also be considered a member of the immediate family if actually residing in the covered person's household.

\*.\*.\*.\*

- (24) Nonprofit corporation or organization with which associated. – Any not for profit corporation, organization, or association, incorporated or otherwise, that is organized or operating in the State primarily for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, public health and safety, or educational purposes and of which the covered person, filing person, or any member of the covered person's or filing person's immediate family is a director, officer, governing board member, employee, lobbyist registered under Chapter 120C of the General Statutes, or independent contractor. Nonprofit corporation or organization with which associated shall not include any board, entity, or other organization created by this State or by any political subdivision of this State.
- (25) Official action. – Any decision, including administration, approval, disapproval, preparation, recommendation, the rendering of advice, and investigation, made or contemplated in any proceeding, application, submission, request for a ruling or other determination, contract, claim, controversy, investigation, charge, or rule making.

\* \* \* \*

- (27d) Person with which the public servant is associated. – Any of the following:
- a. A member of the public servant's extended family.
  - b. A client of the public servant.
  - c. A business with which the public servant or a member of the public servant's immediate family is associated.
  - d. A nonprofit corporation or association with which the public servant or a member of the public servant's immediate family is associated.
  - e. The State, a political subdivision of the State, a board, or any other entity or organization created by the State or a political subdivision of the State that employs the public servant or a member of the public servant's immediate family.

\* \* \* \*

- (30) Public servants. – All of the following:

\* \* \* \*

- i. All voting members of boards, including ex officio members, permanent designees of any voting member, and members serving by executive, legislative, or judicial branch appointment.