

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Vote:	7 - 0 - 1
Yeas:	Berger, Edwards C., Garrard, Gelser, Jenson, Read, Roblan
Nays:	0
Exc.:	Nolan
Prepared By:	Jerry Watson, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	4/8, 4/10

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Makes changes and clarifications to ethics laws governing public officials. Defines “candidate” for purposes relating to government ethics. Changes definition of “public official” and conforms the application of ethics laws to both “public officials” and “candidates,” throughout the chapter. Clarifies that certain gift limits apply when the source has a legislative or administrative interest in the public official, and not in the public official’s agency. Clarifies that “legislative or administrative interest” lies in a “decision or vote” of the public official. Clarifies that gift limits do not apply to gifts from private employment or volunteer work of the public official or relative when given as part of the usual and customary practice, and bearing no relationship to the official’s holding of public office. Clarifies that officials may attend receptions or meetings when they are representing a governmental entity. Removes ban on entertainment gifts passed in 2007, making entertainment subject to gift limits. Eliminates quarterly reporting for public officials, increases the number of public officials that must file annual Statement of Economic Interest (SEI), changes income reporting requirements, and removes requirement to list names of relatives and household members on SEI. Prohibits Government Ethics Commission from disclosing names of any relatives or members of household provided from January 1, 2008 until January 1, 2010. Prohibits the Ethics Commission from imposing a penalty on an official who relies in good faith on the Ethics Commission manual or a staff advisory opinion. Delays requirement that commission develop an electronic filing system and post filings online in a format searchable by the public. Recognizes the work that public officials provide, and recognizes certain expected ethical standards of conduct. Declares emergency, takes effect on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Meeting intent of ethics laws while responding to concerns and confusion about previous changes to ethics laws
- Overview of proposed changes and comparison with other proposed ethics legislation
- Definitions of “candidate,” “public official,” and “legislative or administrative interest”
- Treatment of food and beverages
- Gift limitations and entertainment
- Impact of elimination of quarterly reports
- Addition of certain persons to list of required statement of economic interest (SEI) filers
- Elimination of requirement to list relative and members of household on SEI
- Elimination of penalty for failure to provide information on relatives and members of household on SEI
- Prohibition on disclosure of names of relatives or household members by Government Ethics Commission

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Changes the period of time during which the Oregon Government Ethics Commission may not disclose the names of relatives or household members supplied on statements of economic interest by extending the ending date for that time period to January 1, 2010 (rather than effective date of Act), the date on which the provision abolishing the requirement to include names of any relative or member of household takes effect.

BACKGROUND: In 2007, the Legislature passed two major ethics reform bills (Senate Bill 10 and House Bill 2595). During 2008, the Senate Interim Committee on Rules and Executive Appointments conducted public hearings on concerns about changes in the ethics laws. Senate President Courtney and House Speaker Merkley appointed an Ethics Reform Review Team in 2008, which reviewed complaints and summarized perceived problems. Senate Bill 30-B is intended to address those concerns.

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This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.