

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 536 (Senator Kittleman)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Public Ethics Laws - Meals - Regulated Lobbyist Reporting Requirements

This bill requires a regulated lobbyist that invites members of a standing committee of the General Assembly or a recognized county or regional delegation of members of the General Assembly to a meal during the legislative session to file, on or before June 30 of each year, a report disclosing the name of each member who consumed food and beverages at the meal, the date and value of the gift, and the identity of any person or entity to which the gift is attributable. A member who paid for the cost of the food and beverages consumed at the meal, however, may not be included in the report.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$10,000 in FY 2012 to incorporate an additional report in the State Ethics Commission's electronic filing system and online training program.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A "regulated lobbyist" is a person or entity required under the Maryland Public Ethics Law to register with the State Ethics Commission because the person or entity generally has made certain expenditures and/or received certain compensation to influence legislative or executive action.

Regulated lobbyists are subject to various specified reporting requirements under the Maryland Public Ethics Law with respect to gifts to or for government officials, employees, and/or members of the immediate families of officials or employees, including food and beverages.

When a regulated lobbyist invites all members of a legislative unit (defined as the General Assembly; either house of the General Assembly; a standing committee of the General Assembly; or a recognized county or regional delegation of members of the General Assembly) to a meal or reception, at least five days prior to the meal or reception, the lobbyist must extend a written invitation to all members of the legislative unit and register the meal or reception with the Department of Legislative Services (DLS). DLS publishes a weekly list of such meals and receptions. The regulated lobbyist must report the total cost of the meal or reception, including the identity of any sponsor who contributes to the cost and the amount of the contribution, to the State Ethics Commission within 14 days after the date of the meal or reception.

State Fiscal Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$10,000 in fiscal 2012 for consultant services to incorporate an additional lobbyist report in the State Ethics Commission's existing electronic filing system and online training program. State Ethics Commission staff is unable to make the changes without the assistance of professional consultants.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): State Ethics Commission, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 9, 2011
mlm/mcr

Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510