

SENATE BILL 251

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(PRE-FILED)

51r0043
CF HB 230

By: **Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee (By Request – Departmental – State Ethics Commission)**

Requested: September 18, 2024

Introduced and read first time: January 8, 2025

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: January 24, 2025

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Public Ethics Law – Training and Financial Disclosure Requirements**
3 **– Revisions**

4 FOR the purpose of altering the format of certain training courses provided by the State
5 Ethics Commission for certain State employees and regulated lobbyists; altering the
6 scope of disclosure for the employment of an individual or a member of the
7 individual's immediate family reported in a financial disclosure statement; and
8 generally relating to public ethics training and financial disclosure requirements.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
10 Article – General Provisions
11 Section 5–205(d) and (e), 5–505(c)(2)(i), and 5–607(i)
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

14 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
15 Article – General Provisions
16 Section 5–505(c)(1) and 5–607(a)
17 Annotated Code of Maryland
18 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

19 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
20 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



Article – General Provisions

5–205.

(d) (1) The Ethics Commission shall provide a training course [of at least 2 hours] **THROUGH ONLINE TRAINING OR LIVE PRESENTATION** on the CONFLICT OF INTEREST, FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE, RELEVANT ADMINISTRATIVE, AND OTHER APPLICABLE requirements of the Maryland Public Ethics Law for an individual who:

(i) fills a vacancy in a position that has been identified as a public official position under § 5–103 of this title;

(ii) serves in a position identified as a public official position under § 5–103 of this title; or

(iii) on or after January 19, 2023, is a State official that is subject to the jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission under § 5–104(a) of this title.

(2) The individual shall complete the training course within 6 months of:

(i) filling a vacancy; or

(ii) a position being identified as a public official position.

(3) The training requirement under this subsection does not apply to an individual who:

(i) except for a member of a board of license commissioners or a liquor control board, is a public official only as a member of a commission, task force, or similar entity; or

(ii) has completed a training course provided by the Ethics Commission while serving in another public official position.

(e) (1) (i) The Ethics Commission shall provide a training course for regulated lobbyists and prospective regulated lobbyists at least twice each year **THROUGH ONLINE TRAINING OR LIVE PRESENTATION** on the provisions of the Maryland Public Ethics Law, including provisions related to discrimination and harassment, relevant to regulated lobbyists.

(ii) One training course shall be held each January.

(2) When a person initially registers as a regulated lobbyist, the Ethics Commission shall provide the person with information on the provisions of the Maryland Public Ethics Law relevant to regulated lobbyists.

1 5-505.

2 (c) (1) Notwithstanding subsection (b) of this section, an official or employee
3 may accept a gift listed in paragraph (2) of this subsection unless:

4 (i) the gift would tend to impair the impartiality and independent
5 judgment of the official or employee; or

6 (ii) as to a gift of significant value:

7 1. the gift would give the appearance of impairing the
8 impartiality and independent judgment of the official or employee; or

9 2. the official or employee believes or has reason to believe
10 that the gift is designed to impair the impartiality and independent judgment of the official
11 or employee.

12 (2) Subject to paragraph (1) of this subsection, subsection (b) of this section
13 does not apply to:

14 (i) 1. except for officials of the Legislative Branch, meals or
15 beverages received and consumed by the official or employee in the presence of the donor
16 or sponsoring entity;

17 2. for officials of the Legislative Branch, food or beverages
18 received and consumed by the official in the presence of the donor or sponsoring entity as
19 part of a meal or reception to which all members of a legislative unit were invited;

20 3. for a member of the General Assembly, food or beverages
21 received from a donor or sponsoring entity, other than an individual regulated lobbyist
22 described in [§ 5-701(a)(1)] **§ 5-702(A)(1)** of this title, during a period when the General
23 Assembly is not in session, at a location that is within a county that contains the member's
24 district, provided that the donor or sponsoring entity is located within a county that
25 contains the member's district; or

26 4. for a member of the General Assembly, food or beverages
27 received at the time and geographic location of a meeting of a legislative organization for
28 which the member's presiding officer has approved the member's attendance at State
29 expense;

30 5-607.

31 (a) A statement that is required under § 5-601(a) of this subtitle shall contain
32 schedules disclosing the information and interests specified in this section, if known, for
33 the individual making the statement for the applicable period.

1 (i) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the statement
2 shall include a schedule listing the name and address of each:

3 (i) [place] **SOURCE** of the [salaried] **COMPENSATED** employment,
4 including secondary employment, of the individual or a member of the individual's
5 immediate family at any time during the applicable period;

6 (ii) business entity of which the individual or a member of the
7 individual's immediate family was a sole or partial owner, and from which the individual
8 or family member received earned income, at any time during the applicable period; and

9 (iii) for a statement filed on or after January 1, 2019, if the
10 individual's spouse is a regulated lobbyist, entity that has engaged the spouse for lobbying
11 purposes.

12 (2) The statement may not include a listing of a minor child's employment
13 or business entities of which the child is sole or partial owner, unless the place of
14 employment or the business entity:

15 (i) is subject to the regulation or authority of the agency that
16 employs the individual; or

17 (ii) has contracts in excess of \$10,000 with the agency that employs
18 the individual.

19 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
20 October 1, 2025.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.