

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 20

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1999 Regular Session
9lr2023
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By: **Delegate Taylor**

Introduced and read first time: February 19, 1999

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Ethics Law - Study Commission on Lobbyist Ethics**

3 FOR the purpose of creating a Study Commission on Lobbyist Ethics; providing for
4 the appointment of the Commission; specifying the duties of the Commission;
5 requiring the Commission to issue a certain report by a certain date; providing
6 for the termination of the Commission; and generally relating to the Study
7 Commission on Lobbyist Ethics.

8 WHEREAS, The Maryland Public Ethics Law was enacted in 1979 to assure the
9 people of this State that the operations of government are free from improper
10 influence and the appearance of improper influence; and

11 WHEREAS, The Ethics Law regulates not only officials and public employees,
12 but also persons who lobby on behalf of private sector interests; and

13 WHEREAS, While officials and employees are subject to an extensive code of
14 ethical conduct under the Ethics Law, lobbyists are generally subject only to financial
15 reporting requirements, administered by the State Ethics Commission; and

16 WHEREAS, Since the enactment of the Ethics Law 20 years ago, the business of
17 lobbying has grown enormously, with a substantial increase in the number of
18 lobbyists, their compensation, and their impact on the legislative process and the
19 functioning of the Executive Branch; and

20 WHEREAS, Consideration should be given to moving the offices of the State
21 Ethics Commission, which regulates persons who lobby the Governor and General
22 Assembly, from Towson to Annapolis; and

23 WHEREAS, In 1998, the General Assembly created a special study commission
24 to revise the law relating to legislative ethics, but did not authorize that commission
25 to review the provisions of the Ethics Law relating to lobbyists; and

26 WHEREAS, The people of Maryland have a right to be assured that the practice
27 of lobbying is carried out in a way that enhances the public welfare and does not
28 subject our government to improper influence or create the appearance of improper
29 influence; now, therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That:

2 (a) There is a Study Commission on Lobbyist Ethics.

3 (b) The Study Commission shall consist of the following 11 members:

4 (1) Three individuals, at least one of whom shall be a member of the
5 Senate of Maryland and one of whom shall be a regulated lobbyist, appointed by the
6 President of the Senate;

7 (2) Three individuals, at least one of whom shall be a member of the
8 House of Delegates and one of whom shall be a regulated lobbyist, appointed by the
9 Speaker of the House; and

10 (3) Five individuals, at least one of whom shall be a member of the State
11 Ethics Commission and one of whom shall be a regulated lobbyist, appointed by the
12 Governor.

13 (c) The chairman of the Study Commission shall be designated jointly by the
14 President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House.

15 (d) The Department of Legislative Services and the State Ethics Commission
16 shall provide staff for the Study Commission.

17 (e) The Study Commission shall:

18 (1) Examine the Maryland Public Ethics Law as it relates to lobbyists;

19 (2) Collect information about lobbying practices and standards of ethics
20 for lobbyists, including provisions of law relating to the regulation of lobbyists
21 enacted by other jurisdictions;

22 (3) Receive testimony, as the Commission considers appropriate;

23 (4) Formulate a Code of Ethics for Lobbyists;

24 (5) Consider whether the offices of the State Ethics Commission should
25 be moved to Annapolis;

26 (6) Propose any appropriate statutory changes to the Maryland Public
27 Ethics Law pertaining to lobbyists; and

28 (7) Report its findings to the Governor and, subject to § 2-1246 of the
29 State Government Article, to the General Assembly not later than December 31, 1999.

30 (f) The Study Commission shall terminate its existence after December 31,
31 1999; and be it further

32 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
33 Legislative Services to the Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland;

- 1 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
- 2 the Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Speaker of the House of Delegates.