Unofficial Restated Alabama Ethics Act
Based on Statutory Revisions from 2010 – 2015*
(Revised Sections Highlighted in Yellow)

§ 36-25-1 – Definitions – *page 2*

§36-25-1.1 – Lobbying – *page 11*

§ 36-25-2 – Legislative findings and declarations; purpose of chapter – *page 12*

§ 36-25-3 – Commission; generally – *page 13*

§ 36-25-4 – Commission; duties – *page 16*

§ 36-25-4.1 – Commission; Public access to complaint, investigation, and disposition – *page 21*

§ 36-25-4.2 – Commission; State Ethics Law training programs – *page 22*

§ 36-25-4.3 – Commission; Electronic database filing and access – *page 24*

§ 36-25-5 – Personal use of office – *page 25*

§ 36-25-5.1 – Limitation on actions of lobbyists, subordinates of lobbyists, and principals – *page 26*

§ 36-25-5.2 – Public disclosure of information on officials, candidates, or spouses – *page 27*

§ 36-25-6 – Use of contributions – *page 28*

§ 36-25-7 – Offering, soliciting, or receiving anything for purpose of influencing official action – *page 28*

§ 36-25-8 – Confidential information – *page 29*

§ 36-25-9 – Conflicts of interest – *page 29*

§ 36-25-10 – Representation of client or constituent before board or department – *page 30*

§ 36-25-11 – Public contracts – *page 30*

§ 36-25-12 – Bribery; regulatory officials – *page 30*

§ 36-25-13 – Actions prohibited for two years after departure – *page 31*

§ 36-25-14 – Filing of statement of economic interests – *page 33*

§ 36-25-15 – Required filings by candidates for office – *page 37*

§ 36-25-16 – Reports by persons who are related to public officials and employees – *page 38*

§ 36-25-17 – Reports of violations; cooperation of agency heads – *page 38*

§ 36-25-18 – Lobbying; registration – *page 39*

§ 36-25-19 – Lobbying; quarterly reports of activities – *page 40*

§ 36-25-20 – Lobbying; notice of termination – *page 41*

§ 36-25-21 – Lobbying; reports constitute public records – *page 41*

§ 36-25-22 – Lobbying; provisions do not affect certain professional services – *page 41*

§ 36-25-23 – Lobbying; former legislators; solicitation of lobbyists – *page 42*

§ 36-25-24 – Prohibition on discrimination against employee filing complaint – *page 43*

§ 36-25-25 – *[Previously Repealed by Act No. 1995-194]* – *page 43*

§ 36-25-26 – False reporting for purpose of influencing legislation – *page 43*

§ 36-25-27 – Penalties; enforcement; jurisdiction, venue, judicial review; limitations period – *page 44*

§ 36-25-28 – Personal lobbying – *page 46*

§ 36-25-29 – Appropriations – *page 46*

§ 36-25-30 – Construction of chapter – *page 46*

*The Ethics Act has been amended by ten different acts since 2010, including in 2015 by Act No. 2015-495. All revisions are shown in ~~redline~~ and blueline format. The 2015 revisions are also highlighted in gray. **The 2015 revisions take effect on September 1, 2015.**

§ 36-25-1. Definitions[1]

Whenever used in this chapter, the following words and terms shall have the following meanings:

(1) Business. Any corporation, partnership, proprietorship, firm, enterprise, franchise, association, organization, self-employed individual, or any other legal entity.

(2) Business with which the person is associated. Any business of which the person or a member of his or her family is an officer, owner, partner, board of director member, employee, or holder of more than five percent of the fair market value of the business.

(3) Candidate. This term as used in this chapter shall have the same meaning ascribed to it in Section 17-22A-2.

(4) Commission. The State Ethics Commission.

(5) Complaint. Written allegation or allegations that a violation of this chapter has occurred.

(6) Complainant. A person who alleges a violation or violations of this chapter by filing a complaint against a respondent.

(7) Confidential information. A complaint filed pursuant to this chapter, together with any statement, conversations, knowledge of evidence, or information received from the complainant, witness, or other person related to such complaint.

(8) Conflict of interest. A conflict on the part of a public official or public employee between his or her private interests and the official responsibilities inherent in an office of public trust. A conflict of interest involves any action, inaction, or decision by a public official or public employee in the discharge of his or her official duties which would materially affect his or her financial interest or those of his or her family members or any business with which the person is associated in a manner different from the manner it affects the other members of the class to which he or she belongs. A conflict of interest shall not include any of the following:

> **a.** A loan or financial transaction made or conducted in the ordinary course of business.
>
> **b.** An occasional nonpecuniary award publicly presented by an organization for performance of public service.
>
> **c.** Payment of or reimbursement for actual and necessary expenditures for travel and subsistence for the personal attendance of a public official or public employee at a convention or other meeting at which he or she is scheduled to meaningfully participate in connection with his or her official duties and for which attendance no reimbursement is made by the state.

---

[1] This section was modified by Act Nos. 2010-764, 2012-433, and 2014-440. For this section, changes to subsection numbers do not include redline strikethroughs.

d. Any campaign contribution, including the purchase of tickets to, or advertisements in journals, for political or testimonial dinners, if the contribution is actually used for political purposes and is not given under circumstances from which it could reasonably be inferred that the purpose of the contribution is to substantially influence a public official in the performance of his or her official duties.

(9) Day. Calendar day.

(10) Dependent. Any person, regardless of his or her legal residence or domicile, who receives 50 percent or more of his or her support from the public official or public employee or his or her spouse or who resided with the public official or public employee for more than 180 days during the reporting period.

(11) De Minimis.[2] A value twenty-five dollars ($25) or less per occasion and an aggregate of fifty dollars ($50) or less in a calendar year from any single provider, or such other amounts as may be prescribed by the Ethics Commission from time to time by rule pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act or adjusted each four years August 1, 2012 to reflect any increase in the cost of living as indicated by the United States Department of Labor Consumer Price Index or any succeeding equivalent index.

(12) Economic Development Function. Any function reasonably and directly related to the advancement of a specific, good-faith economic development or trade promotion project or objective.

(13) Educational Function. A meeting, event, or activity held within the State of Alabama, or if the function is predominantly attended by participants from other states, held within the continental United States, which is organized around a formal program or agenda of educational or informational speeches, debates, panel discussions, or other presentations concerning matters within the scope of the participants' official duties or other matters of public policy, including social services and community development policies, economic development or trade, ethics, government services or programs, or government operations, and which, taking into account the totality of the program or agenda, could not reasonably be perceived as a subterfuge for a purely social, recreational, or entertainment function.

(14) Family member of the public employee. The spouse or a dependent of the public employee.

(15) Family member of the public official. The spouse, a dependent, an adult child and his or her spouse, a parent, a spouse's parents, a sibling and his or her spouse, of the public official.

(16) Governmental corporations and authorities. Public or private corporations and authorities, including but not limited to, hospitals or other health care corporations, established pursuant to state law by state, county or municipal governments for the purpose of carrying out a specific governmental function. Notwithstanding the foregoing, all employees, including contract employees, of hospitals or other health care corporations and authorities are exempt from the

[2] The definition of "De Minimis" was added by Act No. 2012-433.

provisions of this chapter.

(17) Household. The public official, public employee, and his or her spouse and dependents.

(18) Law enforcement officer. A full-time employee of a governmental unit responsible for the prevention or investigation of crime who is authorized by law to carry firearms, execute search warrants, and make arrests.

(19) Legislative body.[3] The ~~Senate of Alabama, the House of Representatives of Alabama, a county commission, city council, city commission, town council, or municipal council or commission, and any committee or subcommittee thereof.~~ term "legislative body" includes the following:

> **a.** The Legislature of Alabama, which includes both the Senate of Alabama and the House of Representatives of Alabama, unless specified otherwise by the express language of any provision herein, and any committee or subcommittee thereof.
>
> **b.** A county commission, and any committee or subcommittee thereof.
>
> **c.** A city council, city commission, town council, or other municipal council or commission, and any committee or subcommittee thereof.

(20) Lobby or Lobbying. The practice of promoting, opposing, or in any manner influencing or attempting to influence the introduction, defeat, or enactment of legislation before any legislative body; opposing or in any manner influencing the executive approval, veto, or amendment of legislation; or the practice of promoting, opposing, or in any manner influencing or attempting to influence the enactment, promulgation, modification, or deletion of regulations before any regulatory body.~~; provided, however, that~~ The term does not include providing public testimony before a legislative body or regulatory body or any committee thereof ~~shall not be deemed lobbying~~.

(21) Lobbyist.

> **a.** The term lobbyist includes any of the following:
>
> > **1.** A person who receives compensation or reimbursement from another person, group, or entity to lobby.
> >
> > **2.** A person who lobbies as a regular and usual part of employment, whether or not any compensation in addition to regular salary and benefits is received.
> >
> > ~~**3.** A person who expends in excess of one hundred dollars ($100) for a thing of value, not including funds expended for travel, subsistence expenses, and literature, buttons, stickers, publications, or other acts of free speech, during a calendar year to lobby.~~

[3] The definition of "Legislative Body" was modified by Act No. 2014-440.

34. A consultant to the state, county, or municipal levels of government or their instrumentalities, in any manner employed to influence legislation or regulation, regardless whether the consultant is paid in whole or part from state, county, municipal, or private funds.

45. An employee, a paid consultant, or a member of the staff of a lobbyist, whether or not he or she is paid, who regularly communicates with members of a legislative body regarding pending legislation and other matters while the legislative body is in session.

b. The term lobbyist does not include any of the following:

1. A member of a legislative body An elected official on a matter which involves that person's official duties.

2. A person or attorney rendering professional services in drafting bills or in advising clients and in rendering opinions as to the construction and effect of proposed or pending legislation, executive action, or rules or regulations, where those professional services are not otherwise connected with legislative, executive, or regulatory action.

3. Reporters and editors while pursuing normal reportorial and editorial duties.

4. Any citizen not lobbying for compensation who contacts a member of a legislative body, or gives public testimony on a particular issue or on particular legislation, or for the purpose of influencing legislation and who is merely exercising his or her constitutional right to communicate with members of a legislative body.

5. A person who appears before a legislative body, a regulatory body, or an executive agency to either sell or purchase goods or services.

6. A person whose primary duties or responsibilities do not include lobbying, but who may, from time to time, organize social events for members of a legislative body to meet and confer with members of professional organizations and who may have only irregular contacts with members of a legislative body when the body is not in session or when the body is in recess.

7. A person who is a member of a business, professional, or membership organization by virtue of the person's contribution to or payment of dues to the organization even though the organization engages in lobbying activities.

8. A state governmental agency head or his or her designee who provides or communicates, or both, information relating to policy or positions affecting the governmental agencies which he or she represents.

(22) Minor violation. Any violation of this chapter in which the public official or public employee receives an economic gain in an amount less than two hundred fifty dollars ($250) or

the governmental entity has an economic loss of less than two hundred fifty dollars ($250).

(23) Person. A business, individual, corporation, partnership, union, association, firm, committee, club, or other organization or group of persons.

(24) Principal. A person or business which employs, hires, or otherwise retains a lobbyist. ~~Nothing in this chapter shall be deemed to prohibit a principal from simultaneously serving as his or her own lobbyist~~ A principal is not a lobbyist but is not allowed to give a thing of value.

(25) Probable cause. A finding that the allegations are more likely than not to have occurred.

(26) Public employee. Any person employed at the state, county, or municipal level of government or their instrumentalities, including governmental corporations and authorities, but excluding employees of hospitals or other health care corporations including contract employees of those hospitals or other health care corporations, who is paid in whole or in part from state, county, or municipal funds. For purposes of this chapter, a public employee does not include a person employed on a part-time basis whose employment is limited to providing professional services other than lobbying, the compensation for which constitutes less than 50 percent of the part-time employee's income.

(27) Public official. Any person elected to public office, whether or not that person has taken office, by the vote of the people at state, county, or municipal level of government or their instrumentalities, including governmental corporations, and any person appointed to a position at the state, county, or municipal level of government or their instrumentalities, including governmental corporations. For purposes of this chapter, a public official includes the chairs and vice-chairs or the equivalent offices of each state political party as defined in Section 17-13-40.

(28) Regulatory body. A state agency which issues regulations in accordance with the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act or a state, county, or municipal department, agency, board, or commission which controls, according to rule or regulation, the activities, business licensure, or functions of any group, person, or persons.

(29) Reporting period. The reporting official's or employee's fiscal tax year as it applies to his or her United States personal income tax return.

(30) Reporting year. The reporting official's or employee's fiscal tax year as it applies to his or her United States personal income tax return.

(31) Respondent. A person alleged to have violated a provision of this chapter and against whom a complaint has been filed with the commission.

(32) Statement of economic interests. A financial disclosure form made available by the commission which shall be completed and filed with the commission prior to April 30 of each year covering the preceding calendar year by certain public officials and public employees.

(33) Supervisor. Any person having authority to hire, transfer, suspend, lay off, recall, promote, discharge, assign, or discipline other public employees, or any person responsible to direct them, or to adjust their grievances, or to recommend personnel action, if, in connection with the

foregoing, the exercise of the authority is not of a merely routine or clerical nature but requires the use of independent judgment.

(34) Thing of value.

a. Any gift, benefit, favor, service, gratuity, tickets or passes to an entertainment, social or sporting event ~~offered only to public officials~~, unsecured loan, other than those loans and forbearances made in the ordinary course of business, reward, promise of future employment, or honoraria or other item of monetary value.

b. The term, thing of value, does not include any of the following, provided that no particular course of action is required as a condition to the receipt thereof:

~~1. Campaign contribution.~~

~~2. Seasonal gifts of an insignificant economic value of less than one hundred dollars ($100) if the aggregate value of such gifts from any single donor is less than two hundred fifty dollars ($250) during any one calendar year.~~

~~3. Hospitality extended to a public official, public employee, and his or her respective household as a social occasion in the form of food and beverages where the provider is present, lodging in the continental United States and Alaska incidental to the social occasion, and tickets to social or sporting events if the hospitality does not extend beyond three consecutive days and is not continuous in nature and the aggregate value of such hospitality in excess of two hundred fifty dollars ($250) within a calendar day is reported to the commission by the provider provided that the reporting requirement contained in this section shall not apply where the expenditures are made to or on behalf of an organization to which a federal income tax deduction is permitted under subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or any charitable, education or eleemosynary cause of Section 501 of Title 26 of the U.S. Code, and where the public official or public employee does not receive any direct financial benefit. The reporting shall include the name or names of the recipient or recipients, the value of the entire expenditure, the date or dates of the expenditure, and the type of expenditure.~~

~~4. Reasonable transportation, food and beverages where the provider is present, and lodging expenses in the continental United States and Alaska which are provided in conjunction with an educational or informational purpose, together with any hospitality associated therewith; provided, that such hospitality is less than 50 percent of the time spent at such event, and provided further that if the aggregate value of such transportation, lodging, food, beverages, and any hospitality provided to such public employee, public official, and his or her respective household is in excess of two hundred fifty dollars ($250) within a calendar day the total amount expended shall be reported to the commission by the provider. The reporting shall include the name or names of the recipient or recipients, the value of the entire expenditure, the date or dates of the expenditure,~~

~~and the type of expenditure.~~

~~5. Payment of or reimbursement for actual and necessary expenditures for travel and subsistence of a public official or public employee in connection with an economic development research or trade mission, or for attendance at a mission or meeting in which he or she is scheduled to meaningfully participate, or regarding matters related to his or her official duties, and for which attendance no reimbursement is made by the state; provided, that any hospitality in the form of entertainment, recreation, or sporting events shall constitute less than 25% of the time spent in connection with the event. If the aggregate value of any such hospitality extended to the public employee, public official, and his or her respective household is in excess of two hundred fifty dollars ($250) within a calendar day, the total amount expended for that day shall be reported to the commission by the provider. The reporting shall include the name or names of the recipient or recipients, the value of such expenditures, the date or dates of the expenditure, and the type of expenditure.~~

~~6. Promotional items commonly distributed to the general public and food or beverages of a nominal value.~~

1. A contribution reported under Chapter 5 of Title 17 or a contribution to an inaugural or transition committee.

2. Anything given by a family member of the recipient under circumstances which make it clear that it is motivated by a family relationship.

3. Anything given by a friend of the recipient under circumstances which make it clear that it is motivated by a friendship and not given because of the recipient's official position. Relevant factors include whether the friendship preexisted the recipient's status as a public employee, public official, or candidate and whether gifts have been previously exchanged between them.

4. Greeting cards, and other[4] items, services with little intrinsic value which are intended solely for presentation, such as plaques, certificates, and trophies, promotional items commonly distributed to the general public, and items or services of de minimis value.

5. Loans from banks and other financial institutions on terms generally available to the public.

6. Opportunities and benefits, including favorable rates and commercial discounts, available to the public or to a class consisting of all government employees.

7. Rewards and prizes given to competitors in contests or events, including random drawings, which are open to the public.

[4] The phrase "and other" was added by Act No. 2012-433.

8. Anything that is paid for by a governmental entity or an entity created by a governmental entity to support the governmental entity or secured by a governmental entity under contract, except for tickets to a sporting event offered by an educational institution to anyone other than faculty, staff, or administration of the institution.

9. Anything for which the recipient pays full value.

10. Compensation and other benefits earned from a non-government employer, vendor, client, prospective employer, or other business relationship in the ordinary course of employment or non-governmental business activities under circumstances which make it clear that the thing is provided for reasons unrelated to the recipient's public service as a public official or public employee.

11. Any assistance provided or rendered in connection with a safety or a health emergency.

12. Payment of or reimbursement for actual and necessary transportation and lodging expenses, as well as waiver of registration fees and similar costs, to facilitate the attendance of a public official or public employee, and the spouse of the public official or public employee, at an educational function or widely attended event of which the person is a primary sponsor. This exclusion applies only if the public official or public employee meaningfully participates in the event as a speaker or a panel participant, by presenting information related to his or her agency or matters pending before his or her agency, or by performing a ceremonial function appropriate to his or her official position; or if the public official's or public employee's attendance at the event is appropriate to the performance of his or her official duties or representative function.

13. Payment of or reimbursement for actual and necessary transportation and lodging expenses to facilitate a public official's or public employee's participation in an economic development function.

14. Hospitality, meals, and other food and beverages provided to a public official or public employee, and the spouse of the public official or public employee, as an integral part of an educational function, economic development function, work session, or widely attended event, such as a luncheon, banquet, or reception hosted by a civic club, chamber of commerce, charitable or educational organization, or trade or professional association.

15. Any function or activity pre-certified by the Director of the Ethics Commission as a function that meets any of the above criteria.

16. Meals and other food and beverages provided to a public official or public employee in a setting other than any of the above functions not to exceed for a lobbyist twenty-five dollars ($25) per meal with a limit of one hundred fifty dollars ($150) per year; and not to exceed for a principal fifty dollars ($50) per meal with a limit of two hundred fifty dollars ($250) per year. Notwithstanding

the foregoing, the lobbyist's limits herein shall not count against the principal's limits and likewise, the principal's limits shall not count against the lobbyist's limits.

17. Anything either (i) provided by an association or organization to which the state or, in the case of a local government official or employee, the local government pays annual dues as a membership requirement or (ii) provided by an association or organization to a public official who is a member of the association or organization and, as a result of his or her service to the association or organization, is deemed to be a public official. Further included in this exception is payment of reasonable compensation by a professional or local government association or corporation to a public official who is also an elected officer or director of the professional or local government association or corporation for services actually provided to the association or corporation in his or her capacity as an officer or director.

18. Any benefit received as a discount on accommodations, when the discount is given to the public official because the public official is a member of an organization or association whose entire membership receives the discount.

~~**c.** Nothing in this chapter shall be deemed to limit, prohibit, or otherwise require the disclosure of a personal gift made to a public official or public employee from a spouse, intended spouse, dependent, adult child, sibling, parent, grandparent, uncle, aunt, nephews, nieces or cousins of the public official or public employee, except as otherwise provided by law.~~

c~~d~~. Nothing in this chapter shall be deemed to limit, prohibit, or otherwise require the disclosure of gifts through inheritance received by a public employee or public official.

(35) Value. The fair market price of a like item if purchased by a private citizen. In the case of tickets to social and sporting events and associated passes, the value is the face value printed on the ticket.

(36) Widely Attended Event. A gathering, dinner, reception, or other event of mutual interest to a number of parties at which it is reasonably expected that more than 12 individuals will attend and that individuals with a diversity of views or interest will be present.

§36-25-1.1. Lobbying[5]

Lobbying includes promoting or attempting to influence the awarding of a grant or contract with any department or agency of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of state government.

No member of the Legislature, for a fee, reward, or other compensation, in addition to that received in his or her official capacity, shall represent any person, firm, corporation, or other business entity before an executive department or agency.

[5] This section was added by Act No. 2010-762.

§ 36-25-2. Legislative findings and declarations; purpose of chapter

(a) The Legislature hereby finds and declares:

(1) It is essential to the proper operation of democratic government that public officials be independent and impartial.

(2) Governmental decisions and policy should be made in the proper channels of the governmental structure.

(3) No public office should be used for private gain other than the remuneration provided by law.

(4) It is important that there be public confidence in the integrity of government.

(5) The attainment of one or more of the ends set forth in this subsection is impaired whenever there exists a conflict of interest between the private interests of a public official or a public employee and the duties of the public official or public employee.

(6) The public interest requires that the law protect against such conflicts of interest and establish appropriate ethical standards with respect to the conduct of public officials and public employees in situations where conflicts exist.

(b) It is also essential to the proper operation of government that those best qualified be encouraged to serve in government. Accordingly, legal safeguards against conflicts of interest shall be so designed as not to unnecessarily or unreasonably impede the service of those men and women who are elected or appointed to do so. An essential principle underlying the staffing of our governmental structure is that its public officials and public employees should not be denied the opportunity, available to all other citizens, to acquire and retain private economic and other interests, except where conflicts with the responsibility of public officials and public employees to the public cannot be avoided.

(c) The Legislature declares that the operation of responsible democratic government requires that the fullest opportunity be afforded to the people to petition their government for the redress of grievances and to express freely to the legislative bodies and to officials of the executive branch, their opinions on legislation, on pending governmental actions, and on current issues. To preserve and maintain the integrity of the legislative and administrative processes, it is necessary that the identity, expenditures, and activities of certain persons who engage in efforts to persuade members of the legislative bodies or members of the executive branch to take specific actions, either by direct communication to these officials, or by solicitation of others to engage in such efforts, be publicly and regularly disclosed. This chapter shall be liberally construed to promote complete disclosure of all relevant information and to insure that the public interest is fully protected.

(d) It is the policy and purpose of this chapter to implement these objectives of protecting the integrity of all governmental units of this state and of facilitating the service of qualified personnel by prescribing essential restrictions against conflicts of interest in public service without creating unnecessary barriers thereto.

§ 36-25-3. Commission; creation, composition; annual reports; compensation; political activities; director; personnel[6]

(a) There is hereby created a State Ethics Commission composed of five members, each of whom shall be a fair, equitable citizen of this state and of high moral character and ability. The following persons shall not be eligible to be appointed as members: (1) a public official; (2) a candidate; (3) a registered lobbyist and his or her principal; or (4) a former employee of the commission. ~~For purposes of this section, a public official shall not be deemed to include a part-time municipal judge and a registered lobbyist shall not be deemed to include a person whose lobbying activities are limited to providing public testimony to a legislative body or regulatory body or committee thereof.~~ No member of the commission shall be eligible for reappointment to succeed himself or herself. The members of the commission shall be appointed by the following officers: The Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, or in the absence of a Lieutenant Governor, the Presiding Officer of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. ~~and~~ Appointments shall be subject to Senate confirmation and persons appointed shall assume their duties upon confirmation by the Senate. The members of the first commission shall be appointed for terms of office expiring one, two, three, four, and five years, respectively, from September 1, 1975. Successors to the members of the first commission shall serve for a term of five years beginning service on September 1 of the year appointed and serving until their successors are appointed and confirmed. If at any time there should be a vacancy on the commission, a successor member to serve for the unexpired term applicable to such vacancy shall be appointed by the Governor. The commission shall elect one member to serve as chair of the commission and one member to serve as vice chair. The vice chair shall act as chair in the absence or disability of the chair or in the event of a vacancy in that office.

Beginning with the first vacancy on the Ethics Commission after October 1, 1995, if there is not a Black member serving on the commission, that vacancy shall be filled by a Black appointee. Any vacancy thereafter occurring on the commission, shall also be filled by a Black appointee if there is no Black member serving on the commission at that time.

Beginning with the first vacancy on the State Ethics Commission after January 1, 2011, the commission shall always have as a member a State of Alabama-licensed attorney in good standing.

Beginning with the first vacancy on the State Ethics Commission after January 1, 2016, the commission shall always have as a member a former elected public official who served at least two terms of office.

(b) A vacancy in the commission shall not impair the right of the remaining members to exercise all the powers of the commission, and three members thereof shall constitute a quorum.

(c) The commission shall at the close of each fiscal year, or as soon thereafter as practicable, report to the Legislature and the Governor concerning the actions it has taken, the name, salary, and duties of the director, the names and duties of all individuals in its employ, the money it has disbursed, other relevant matters within its jurisdiction, and such recommendations for

[6] This section was modified by Act Nos. 2010-763 and 2015-495. The 2015 revisions are highlighted in gray.

legislation as the commission deems appropriate.

(d) Members of the commission ~~shall~~, while serving on the business of the commission, shall be entitled to receive compensation at the rate of fifty dollars ($50) per day, and each member shall be paid his or her travel expenses incurred in the performance of his or her duties as a member of the commission as other state employees and officials are paid when approved by the chair. If for any reason a member of the commission wishes not to claim and accept the compensation or travel expenses, the member shall inform the director, in writing, of the refusal. The member may at any time during his or her term begin accepting compensation or travel expenses; however, the member's refusal for any covered period shall act as an irrevocable waiver for that period.

(e) All members, officers, agents, attorneys, and employees of the commission shall be subject to this chapter. The director, members of the commission, and all employees of the commission ~~shall~~ may not engage in ~~direct~~ partisan political activity, including the making of campaign contributions, on the state, county, and local levels. The prohibition shall in no way act to limit or restrict such persons' ability to vote in any election.

(f) The commission shall appoint a full-time director. Appointment of the director shall be subject to Senate confirmation, and the person appointed shall assume his or her duties upon confirmation by the Senate. If the Senate fails to vote on an appointee's confirmation before adjourning sine die during the session in which the director is appointed, the appointee is deemed to be confirmed. No appointee whose confirmation is rejected by the Senate may be reappointed. The director shall serve at the pleasure of the commission and shall appoint such other employees as needed. All such employees, except the director, shall be employed subject to ~~the provisions of~~ the state Merit System law, and their compensation shall be prescribed pursuant to ~~such~~ that law. The employment of attorneys shall be subject to subsection (h). The compensation of the director shall be fixed by the commission, payable as the salaries of other state employees. The director shall be responsible for the administrative operations of the commission and shall administer this chapter in accordance with the commission's policies. No ~~regulation~~ rule shall be implemented by the director until adopted by the commission in accordance with Sections 41-22-1 to 41-22-27, inclusive, the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act.

(g) The director may appoint part-time stenographic reporters or certified court reporters, as needed, to take and transcribe the testimony in any formal or informal hearing or investigation before the commission or before any person authorized by the commission. The reporters ~~shall~~ are not ~~be~~ full-time employees of the commission, ~~and shall~~ are not ~~be~~ subject to the Merit System law, and may not participate in the State Retirement System.

(h) The director ~~may~~, with the approval of the Attorney General, may appoint ~~a~~ competent ~~attorney~~ attorneys as legal counsel for the commission. ~~The legal counsel~~ Each attorney so appointed shall be of good moral and ethical character, licensed to practice law in this state, and a member in good standing of the Alabama State Bar Association. ~~The legal counsel~~ Each attorney shall be commissioned as an assistant or deputy attorney general and ~~shall~~, in addition to the powers and duties herein conferred, shall have the authority and duties of an assistant or deputy attorney general, except, that his or her entire time shall be devoted to the commission. ~~The~~ Each attorney shall act ~~as an attorney for~~ on behalf of the commission in actions or proceedings brought by or against the commission pursuant to any ~~provisions of~~ law under the commission's jurisdiction~~,~~ or

in which the commission joins or intervenes as to a matter within the commission's jurisdiction~~,~~ or as a friend of the court or otherwise~~; provided however, nothing in this chapter shall be deemed as a direct grant of subpoena power to the commission~~.

(i) The director shall designate in writing the chief investigator, should there be one, and a maximum of ~~six~~ eight full-time investigators who shall be and are hereby constituted law enforcement officers of the State of Alabama with full and unlimited police power and jurisdiction to enforce the laws of this state pertaining to the operation and administration of the commission and this chapter. Investigators shall meet the requirements of the Alabama Peace Officers' Standards and Training Act, Sections 36-21-40 to 36-21-51, inclusive, and shall in all ways and for all purposes be considered law enforcement officers entitled to all benefits provided in Section 36-15-6(f). ~~; provided however such~~ Notwithstanding the foregoing, the investigators shall only exercise their power of arrest as granted under this chapter pursuant to an order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction.

§ 36-25-4. Commission; duties; complaint; investigation; hearings; fees; finding of violation[7]

(a) The commission shall do all of the following:

(1) Prescribe forms for statements required to be filed by this chapter and make the forms available to persons required to file such statements.

(2) Prepare guidelines setting forth recommended uniform methods of reporting for use by persons required to file statements required by this chapter.

(3) Accept and file any written information voluntarily supplied that exceeds the requirements of this chapter.

(4) Develop, where practicable, a filing, coding, and cross-indexing system consistent with the purposes of this chapter.

(5) Make reports and statements filed with the commission available during regular business hours and online via the Internet to public inquiry subject to such regulations as the commission may prescribe~~ including, but not limited to, regulations requiring identification by name, occupation, address, and telephone number of each person examining information on file with the commission~~.

(6) Preserve reports and statements for a period consistent with the statute of limitations as contained in this chapter. The reports and statements, when no longer required to be retained, shall be disposed of by shredding the reports and statements and disposing of or recycling them, or otherwise disposing of the reports and statements in any other manner prescribed by law. Nothing in this section shall in any manner limit the Department of Archives and History from receiving and retaining any documents pursuant to existing law.

(7) Make investigations with respect to statements filed pursuant to this chapter, and with respect to alleged failures to file, or omissions contained therein, any statement required pursuant to this chapter and, upon complaint by any individual, with respect to alleged violation of any part of this chapter to the extent authorized by law. When ~~when~~ in its opinion a thorough audit of any person or any business should be made in order to determine whether this chapter has been violated, the commission shall direct the Examiner of Public Accounts to have an audit made and a report thereof filed with the commission. The Examiner of Public Accounts ~~shall~~, upon receipt of the directive, shall comply therewith.

(8) Report suspected violations of law to the appropriate law-enforcement authorities.

(9) Issue and publish advisory opinions on the requirements of this chapter, based on a real or hypothetical set of circumstances. Such advisory opinions shall be adopted by a

[7] This section was modified by Act Nos. 2010-763 and 2015-495. The 2015 revisions are highlighted in gray.

majority vote of the members of the commission present and shall be effective and deemed valid until expressly overruled or altered by the commission or a court of competent jurisdiction. The written advisory opinions of the commission shall protect the person at whose request the opinion was issued and any other person reasonably relying, in good faith, on the advisory opinion in a materially like circumstance from liability to the state, a county, or a municipal subdivision of the state because of any action performed or action refrained from in reliance of the advisory opinion. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to protect any person relying on the advisory opinion if the reliance is not in good faith, is not reasonable, is not in a materially like circumstance. The commission may impose reasonable charges for publication of the advisory opinions and monies shall be collected, deposited, dispensed, or retained as provided herein. On October 1, 1995, all prior advisory opinions of the commission in conflict with this chapter, shall be ineffective and thereby deemed invalid and otherwise overruled unless there has been any action performed or action refrained from in reliance of a prior advisory opinion.

(10) Initiate and continue, where practicable, programs for the purpose of educating candidates, officials, employees, and citizens of Alabama on matters of ethics in government service.

(11) In accordance with Sections 41-22-1 to 41-22-27, inclusive, the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act, prescribe, publish, and enforce rules ~~and regulations~~ to carry out this chapter.

(b) Additionally, the commission shall work with the Secretary of State to implement the reporting requirements of the Alabama Fair Campaign Practices Act and shall do all of the following:

(1) Approve all forms required by the Fair Campaign Practices Act.

(2) Suggest accounting methods for candidates, principal campaign committees, and political action committees in connection with reports and filings required by the Fair Campaign Practices Act.

(3) Approve a retention policy for all reports, filings, and underlying documentation required by the Fair Campaign Practices Act.

(4) Approve a manual for all candidates, principal campaign committees, and political action committees, describing the requirements of the Fair Campaign Practices Act that shall be published by the Secretary of State.

(5) Investigate and hold hearings for receiving evidence regarding alleged violations of the Fair Campaign Practices Act as set forth in this chapter that demonstrates a likelihood that the Fair Campaign Practices Act has been violated.

(6) Conduct or authorize audits of any filings required under the Fair Campaign Practices Act if evidence exists that an audit is warranted because of the filing of a complaint in the form required by this chapter or if there exists a material discrepancy or conflict on the face of any filing required by the Fair Campaign Practices Act.

(7) Affirm, set aside, or reduce civil penalties as provided in Section 17-5-19.2.

(8) Refer all evidence and information necessary to the Attorney General or appropriate district attorney for prosecution of any criminal violation of the Fair Campaign Practices Act as set forth in this chapter.

(9) Make investigations with respect to statements filed pursuant to the Fair Campaign Practices Act, and with respect to alleged failures to file, or omissions contained therein, any statement required pursuant to the Fair Campaign Practices Act and, upon complaint by any individual, with respect to alleged violation of any part of that act to the extent authorized by law. When in its opinion a thorough audit of any person or any business should be made in order to determine whether the Fair Campaign Practices Act has been violated, the commission shall direct the Examiner of Public Accounts to have an audit made and a report thereof filed with the commission. The Examiner of Public Accounts, upon receipt of the directive, shall comply therewith.

(10) Issue and publish advisory opinions on the requirements of the Fair Campaign Practices Act, based on a real or hypothetical set of circumstances. Such advisory opinions shall be adopted by a majority vote of the members of the commission present and shall be effective and deemed valid until expressly overruled or altered by the commission or a court of competent jurisdiction. The written advisory opinions of the commission shall protect the person at whose request the opinion was issued and any other person reasonably relying, in good faith, on the advisory opinion in a materially like circumstance from liability of any kind because of any action performed or action refrained from in reliance of the advisory opinion. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to protect any person relying on the advisory opinion if the reliance is not in good faith, is not reasonable, is not in a materially like circumstance. The commission may impose reasonable charges for publication of the advisory opinions and monies shall be collected, deposited, dispensed, or retained as provided herein.

(11) In accordance with Sections 41-22-1 to 41-22-27, inclusive, the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act, prescribe, publish, and enforce rules to carry out this section.

(c)~~**(b)**~~ ~~A~~ Except as necessary to permit the sharing of information and evidence with the Attorney General or a district attorney, a complaint filed pursuant to this chapter or the Fair Campaign Practices Act, together with any statement, evidence, or information received from the complainant, witnesses, or other persons shall be protected by and subject to the same restrictions relating to secrecy and nondisclosure of information, conversation, knowledge, or evidence of Sections 12-16-214 to 12-16-216, inclusive, except that a violation of this section shall constitute a Class C felony. Such restrictions shall apply to all investigatory activities taken by the director, the commission, or a member thereof, staff, employees, or any person engaged by the commission in response to a complaint filed with the commission and to all proceedings relating thereto before the commission. Such restrictions shall also apply to all information and evidence supplied to the Attorney General or district attorney.

(d)~~**(c)**~~ The commission shall not take any investigatory action on a telephonic or written complaint against a respondent so long as the complainant remains anonymous. Investigatory action on a complaint from an identifiable source shall not be initiated until the true identity of

the source has been ascertained and written verification of such ascertainment is in the commission's files. The complaint may only be filed by a person who has or persons who have ~~actual knowledge of~~ credible and verifiable information supporting the allegations contained in the complaint. A complainant may not file a complaint for another person or persons in order to circumvent this subsection. Prior to commencing any investigation, the commission shall: (1) receive a written and signed complaint which sets forth in detail the specific charges against a respondent, and the factual allegations which support such charges; and (2) the director shall conduct a preliminary inquiry in order to make an initial determination that the complaint, on its face alleges facts which if true, would constitute a violation of this chapter or the Fair Campaign Practices Act and that reasonable cause exists to conduct an investigation. If the director determines that the complaint does not allege a violation or that reasonable cause does not exist, the charges shall be dismissed, but such action must be reported to the commission. The commission shall be entitled to authorize an investigation upon ~~a unanimous~~ written consent of ~~all five (5)~~ four commission members, upon an express finding that probable cause exists that a violation or violations of this chapter or the Fair Campaign Practices Act have occurred. Upon the commencement of any investigation, the Alabama Rules of Criminal Procedure as applicable to the grand jury process promulgated by the Alabama Supreme Court shall apply and shall remain in effect until the complaint is dismissed or disposed of in some other manner. A complaint may be initiated by ~~the unanimous~~ a vote of four members of the commission, provided, however, that the commission shall not conduct the hearing, but rather the hearing shall be conducted by three ~~(3)~~ active or retired judges, who shall be appointed by the Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, at least one of whom shall be Black. The ~~three (3) judge~~ three-judge panel shall conduct the hearing in accordance with the procedures contained in this chapter and in accordance with the rules ~~and regulations~~ of the commission. If the ~~three (3) judge~~ three-judge panel unanimously finds that a person covered by this chapter has violated it or that the person covered by the Fair Campaign Practices Act has violated that act, the ~~three (3) judge~~ three-judge panel shall forward the case to the district attorney for the jurisdiction in which the alleged acts occurred or to the Attorney General. In all matters that come before the commission concerning a complaint on an individual, the laws of due process shall apply.

(e)~~**(d)**~~ Not less than 45 days prior to any hearing before the commission, the respondent shall be given notice that a complaint has been filed against him or her and shall be given a summary of the charges contained therein. Upon the timely request of the respondent, a continuance of the hearing for not less than 30 days shall be granted for good cause shown. The respondent charged in the complaint shall have the right to be represented by retained legal counsel. The commission may not require the respondent to be a witness against himself or herself.

(f)~~**(e)**~~ The commission shall provide discovery to the respondent pursuant to the Alabama Rules of Criminal Procedure as promulgated by the Alabama Supreme Court.

(g)~~**(f)**~~ **(1)** All fees, penalties, and fines collected by the commission pursuant to this chapter shall be deposited into the State General Fund.

(2) All monies collected as reasonable payment of costs for copying, reproductions, publications, and lists shall be deemed a refund against disbursement and shall be deposited into the appropriate fund account for the use of the commission.

(h)~~(g)~~ In the course of an investigation, the commission may subpoena witnesses and compel their attendance and may also require the production of books, papers, documents, and other evidence. If any person fails to comply with any subpoena lawfully issued, or if any witness refuses to produce evidence or to testify as to any matter relevant to the investigation, it shall be the duty of any court of competent jurisdiction or the judge thereof, upon the application of the director, to compel obedience upon penalty for contempt, as in the case of disobedience of a subpoena issued for such court or a refusal to testify therein. A subpoena may be issued only upon the vote of four members of the commission upon the express written request of the director. The subpoena shall be subject to Rules 17.1, 17.2, 17.3, and 17.4 of the Alabama Rules of Criminal Procedure. The commission upon seeking issuance of the subpoena shall serve a notice to the recipient of the intent to serve such subpoena. Upon the expiration of 10 days from the service of the notice and the proposed subpoena shall be attached to the notice. Any person or entity served with a subpoena may serve an objection to the issuance of the subpoena within 10 days after service of the notice on the grounds set forth under Rule 17.3(c) of the Alabama Rules of Criminal Procedure, and in such event the subpoena shall not issue until an order to dismiss, modify, or issue the subpoena is entered by a state court of proper jurisdiction, the order to be entered within 30 days after making of the objection. Any vote taken by the members of the commission relative to the issuance of a subpoena shall be protected by and subject to the restrictions relating to secrecy and nondisclosure of information, conversation, knowledge, or evidence of Sections 12-16-214 to 12-16-216, inclusive.

(i)~~(h)~~ After receiving or initiating a complaint, the commission has 180 days to determine whether probable cause exists. At the expiration of 180 days from the date of receipt or commencement of a complaint, if the commission does not find probable cause, the complaint shall be deemed dismissed and cannot be reinstated based on the same facts alleged in the complaint. Upon good cause shown from the general counsel and chief investigator, the director may request from the commission a one-time extension of 180 days. Upon the majority vote of the commission, the staff may be granted a one-time extension of 180 days in which to complete the investigation. If the commission finds probable cause that a person covered by this chapter has violated it or that the person covered by the Fair Campaign Practices Act has violated that act, the case and the commission's findings shall be forwarded to the district attorney for the jurisdiction in which the alleged acts occurred or to the Attorney General. The case, along with the commission's findings, shall be referred for appropriate legal action. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to limit the commission's ability to take appropriate legal action when so requested by the district attorney for the appropriate jurisdiction or by the Attorney General.

(j)~~(i)~~ Within 180 days of receiving a case referred by the commission, the Attorney General or district attorney to whom the case was referred may, upon written request of the commission notify the commission, in writing, stating whether he or she intends to take action against the respondent, including an administrative disposition or settlement, conduct further investigation, or close the case without taking action. If the Attorney General or district attorney decides to pursue the case, he or she, upon written request of the commission, may inform the commission of the final disposition of the case. The written information pursuant to this section shall be maintained by the commission and made available upon request as a public record. The director may request an oral status update from the Attorney General or district attorney from time to time.

§ 36-25-4.1. Public access to complaint, investigation, and disposition[8]

Notwithstanding any other law, regulation, or rule, no complaints shall be made available to the public or available on the Internet until the disposition of the matter. In no event may a complaint be made public or available on the Internet if the complaint is dismissed or found not to have probable cause. In the matters where the complaint is dismissed or found not to have probable cause, only the disposition of the matter may be made available to the public or available on the Internet. Nothing in this section shall be deemed a direct grant of authority for the commission to publicize or make available on the Internet any complaint or investigation if not permitted by any other law, regulation, or rule.

[8] This section was added by Act No. 2010-763.

§ 36-25-4.2. Commission; State Ethics Law training programs[9]

(a) At the beginning of each legislative quadrennium, the State Ethics Commission shall provide for and administer training programs on the State Ethics Law for members of the Legislature, state constitutional officers, cabinet officers, executive staff, municipal mayors, council members and commissioners, county commissioners, and lobbyists.

(1) The training program for legislators shall be held at least once at the beginning of each quadrennium for members of the Legislature. An additional training program shall be held if any changes are made to this chapter, and shall be held within three months of the effective date of the changes. The time and place of the training programs shall be determined by the Executive Director of the State Ethics Commission and the Legislative Council. Each legislator must attend the training programs. The State Ethics Commission shall also provide a mandatory program for any legislator elected in a special election within three months of the date that the legislator assumes office.

(2) The training program for the state constitutional officers, cabinet members, and executive staff, as determined by the Governor, shall be held within the first 30 days after the Governor has been sworn into office. An additional training program shall be held if any changes are made to this chapter, and shall be held within three months of the effective date of the changes. The specific date of the training program shall be established by the Executive Director of the State Ethics Commission with the advice of the Governor and other constitutional officers.

(3) The training program for lobbyists shall be held four times annually as designated by the Executive Director of the State Ethics Commission, the first of which shall be held within the first 30 days of the year. Each lobbyist must attend a training program within 90 days of registering as a lobbyist. A lobbyist who fails to attend a training program shall not be allowed to lobby the Legislature, Executive Branch, Judicial Branch, public officials, or public employees. After attending one training program, a lobbyist shall not be required to attend an additional training program unless any changes are made to this chapter. Such additional mandatory training program shall be held within three months of the effective date of the changes.

(4) All municipal mayors, council members and commissioners, county commissioners, and members of any local board of education in office as of January 1, 2011 shall obtain training within 120 days of that date. Thereafter, all municipal mayors, council members and commissioners, and county commissioners shall obtain training within 120 days of being sworn into office. Training shall be available online and may be conducted either online or in person. Evidence of completion of the training shall be provided to the commission via an electronic reporting system provided on the official website. The scheduling of training opportunities for municipal mayors, council members and commissioners, and county commissioners shall be established by the Executive Director of the State Ethics Commission with the advice and assistance of the Alabama League of Municipalities and the Association of County Commissions of Alabama. Any provision of this section to the contrary notwithstanding, the training for county commissioners

[9] This section was added by Act No. 2010-762.

required by this subdivision shall be satisfied by the successful completion of the 10-hour course on ethical requirements of public officials provided by the Alabama Local Government Training Institute established pursuant to Article 2 of Chapter 3 of Title 11. The Alabama Local Government Training Institute shall quarterly provide written notice to the State Ethics Commission the names of those county commissioners completing the institute's program.

(b) The curriculum of each session and faculty for the training program shall be determined by the Executive Director of the State Ethics Commission. The curriculum shall include, but not be limited to, a review of the current law, a discussion of actual cases and advisory opinions on which the State Ethics Commission has ruled, and a question and answer period for attendees. The faculty for the training program may include the staff of the State Ethics Commission, members of the faculties of the various law schools in the state, and other persons deemed appropriate by the Executive Director of the State Ethics Commission and shall include experts in the field of ethics law, persons affected by the ethics law, and members of the press and media.

(c) Except as provided herein, attendance at any session of the training program shall be mandatory, except in the event the person is suffering a catastrophic illness.

(d) This section shall not preclude the penalizing, prosecution, or conviction of any member of the Legislature, any public official, or public employee prior to such person attending a mandatory training program.

(e) All public employees required to file the Statement of Economic Interests required by Section 36-25-14, no later than May 1, 2011, shall participate in an online educational review of the Alabama Ethics Law provided on the official website of the commission. Employees hired after January 1, 2011, shall have 90 days to comply with this subsection. Evidence of completion of the educational review shall be provided to the commission via an electronic reporting system provided on the official website.

§ 36-25-4.3. Commission; electronic database filing and access[10]

(a) The commission, by April 1, 2012, shall implement and maintain each of the following:

(1) A system for electronic filing of all statements, reports, registrations, and notices required by this chapter.

(2) An electronic database accessible to the public through an Internet website which provides at least the following capabilities:

a. Search and retrieval of all statements, reports, and other filings required by this chapter, excluding complaints made confidential by Section 36-25-4(b) of the Code of Alabama 1975, by the name of the public official or public employee to which they pertain.

b. Generation of an aggregate list of all things of value provided to each public official or public employee and family member of a public official or public employee as reported pursuant to Section 36-25-19, searchable and retrievable by the name of the public official or public employee.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a), the commission shall exclude from any electronic database accessible to the public, identifying information, as defined in Section 41-13-7, that is included in any statement of economic interest filed by any public official or public employee.

(c) The commission shall redact all identifying information on any electronic database accessible to the public, as defined in Section 41-13-7, that is included in any statement of economic interest filed by a public official or public employee and was in the database on August 1, 2013.

[10] This section was originally added by Act No. 2010-762. Subsection (b) was added by Act No. 2013-172, and subsection (c) was added by Act No. 2014-71.

§ 36-25-5. Personal use of office

(a) No public official or public employee shall use or cause to be used his or her official position or office to obtain personal gain for himself or herself, or family member of the public employee or family member of the public official, or any business with which the person is associated unless the use and gain are otherwise specifically authorized by law. Personal gain is achieved when the public official, public employee, or a family member thereof receives, obtains, exerts control over, or otherwise converts to personal use the object constituting such personal gain.

(b) Unless prohibited by the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit a public official from introducing bills, ordinances, resolutions, or other legislative matters, serving on committees, or making statements or taking action in the exercise of his or her duties as a public official. A member of a legislative body may not vote for any legislation in which he or she knows or should have known that he or she has a conflict of interest.

(c) No public official or public employee shall use or cause to be used equipment, facilities, time, materials, human labor, or other public property under his or her discretion or control for the private benefit or business benefit of the public official, public employee, any other person, or principal campaign committee as defined in Section 17-22A-2, which would materially affect his or her financial interest, except as otherwise provided by law or as provided pursuant to a lawful employment agreement regulated by agency policy. Provided, however, nothing in this subsection shall be deemed to limit or otherwise prohibit communication between public officials or public employees and eleemosynary or membership organizations or such organizations communicating with public officials or public employees.

(d) No person shall solicit a public official or public employee to use or cause to be used equipment, facilities, time, materials, human labor, or other public property for such person's private benefit or business benefit, which would materially affect his or her financial interest, except as otherwise provided by law.

(e) No public official or public employee shall, other than in the ordinary course of business, solicit a thing of value from a subordinate or person or business with whom he or she directly inspects, regulates, or supervises in his or her official capacity.

(f) A conflict of interest shall exist when a member of a legislative body, public official, or public employee has a substantial financial interest by reason of ownership of, control of, or the exercise of power over any interest greater than five percent of the value of any corporation, company, association, or firm, partnership, proprietorship, or any other business entity of any kind or character which is uniquely affected by proposed or pending legislation; or who is an officer or director for any such corporation, company, association, or firm, partnership, proprietorship, or any other business entity of any kind or character which is uniquely affected by proposed or pending legislation.

§ 36-25-5.1. Limitation on actions of lobbyists, subordinates of lobbyists, and principals[11]

(a) No lobbyist, subordinate of a lobbyist, or principal shall offer or provide a thing of value to a public employee or public official or to a family member of the public employee or family member of the public official; and no public employee or public official or family member of the public employee or family member of the public official shall solicit or receive a thing of value from a lobbyist, subordinate of a lobbyist, or principal. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a lobbyist, or principal may offer or provide and a public official, public employee, or candidate may solicit or receive items of de minimis value.

(b) A lobbyist does not provide a thing of value, for purposes of this section, merely by arranging, facilitating, or coordinating with his or her principal that is providing and paying for those items.

[11] This section was added by Act No. 2010-764.

§ 36-25-5.2. Public disclosure of information regarding officials, candidates, or spouses employed by or contracting with the state or federal government[12]

(a) For purposes of this section, the term state shall include the State of Alabama and any of its agencies, departments, political subdivisions, counties, colleges and universities and technical schools, the Legislature, the appellate courts, district courts, circuit courts and municipal courts, municipal corporations, and city and county school systems.

(b) Each public official and the spouse of each public official, as well as each candidate and the spouse of each candidate, who is employed by the state or the federal government or who has a contract with the state or the federal government, or who works for a company that receives 50% or more of its revenue from the state, shall notify the commission of such employment or contract within 30 days of beginning employment or within 30 days of the beginning of the contract. Additionally, each public official and the spouse of each public official, as well as each candidate and the spouse of each candidate, who is employed by the state or the federal government or who has a contract with the state or the federal government on August 14, 2011, shall notify the commission of such employment or contract by September 13, 2011. Notification shall be in the form of a filing as described in subsection (c).

(c) The filing with the commission shall include all of the following:

> **(1)** The name of the public official or, when applicable, the name of the candidate.
>
> **(2)** The name of the spouse of the public official or, when applicable, the name of the spouse of the candidate.
>
> **(3)** The department or agency or county or municipality with whom the public official, candidate, or spouse is employed or with whom the public official, candidate, or spouse has a contract.
>
> **(4)** The exact job description or, if applicable, a description of the contract.
>
> **(5)** The beginning and ending dates of employment or, if applicable, the beginning and ending dates of the contract.
>
> **(6)** The compensation, including any and all salary, allowances, and fees, received by the public official or his or her spouse or the candidate or his or her spouse.

(d) If the terms of employment or of the contract change, the public official or his or her spouse or the candidate or his or her spouse shall promptly provide updated information concerning the change with the commission, which shall revise such information in its files.

(e) Filings collected by the commission pursuant to this section are public record and shall be made available on the commission's website.

[12] This section was added by Act No. 2011-674.

§ 36-25-6. Use of contributions

Contributions to an office holder, a candidate, or to a public official's inaugural or transitional fund shall not be converted to personal use.

§ 36-25-7. Offering, soliciting, or receiving anything for purpose of influencing official action; money solicited or received in addition to that received in official capacity[13]

(a) No person shall offer or give to a public official or public employee or a member of the household of a public employee or a member of the household of the public official and none of the aforementioned shall solicit or receive ~~a thing of value~~ anything for the purpose of corruptly influencing official action, regardless of whether or not the thing solicited or received is a thing of value.

(b) No public official or public employee shall solicit or receive ~~a thing of value~~ anything for himself or herself or for a family member of the public employee or family member of the public official for the purpose of corruptly influencing official action, regardless of whether or not the thing solicited or received is a thing of value.

(c) No person shall offer or give a family member of the public official or family member of the public employee ~~a thing of value~~ anything for the purpose of corruptly influencing official action, regardless of whether or not the thing offered or given is a thing of value.

(d) No public official or public employee, shall solicit or receive any money in addition to that received by the public official or public employee in an official capacity for advice or assistance on matters concerning the Legislature, lobbying a legislative body, an executive department or any public regulatory board, commission or other body of which he or she is a member. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a public official or public employee from the performance of his or her official duties or responsibilities.

(e) For purposes of this section, to act corruptly means to act voluntarily, deliberately, and dishonestly to either accomplish an unlawful end or result or to use an unlawful method or means to accomplish an otherwise lawful end or result.

[13] This section was modified by Act Nos. 2010-764 and 2011-632.

§ 36-25-8. Use or disclosure of confidential information for private financial gain

No public official, public employee, former public official or former public employee, for a period consistent with the statute of limitations as contained in this chapter, shall use or disclose confidential information gained in the course of or by reason of his or her position or employment in any way that could result in financial gain other than his or her regular salary as such public official or public employee for himself or herself, a family member of the public employee or family member of the public official, or for any other person or business.

§ 36-25-9. Service on regulatory boards and commissions regulating business with which person associated; members who have financial interest in matter prohibited from voting

(a) Unless expressly provided otherwise by law, no person shall serve as a member or employee of a state, county, or municipal regulatory board or commission or other body that regulates any business with which he is associated. Nothing herein shall prohibit real estate brokers, agents, developers, appraisers, mortgage bankers, or other persons in the real estate field, or other state-licensed professionals, from serving on any planning boards or commissions, housing authorities, zoning board, board of adjustment, code enforcement board, industrial board, utilities board, state board, or commission.

(b) All county or municipal regulatory boards, authorities, or commissions currently comprised of any real estate brokers, agents, developers, appraisers, mortgage bankers, or other persons in the real estate industry may allow these individuals to continue to serve out their current term if appointed before December 31, 1991, except that at the conclusion of such term subsequent appointments shall reflect that membership of real estate brokers and agents shall not exceed more than one less of a majority of any county or municipal regulatory board or commission effective January 1, 1994.

(c) No member of any county or municipal agency, board, or commission shall vote or participate in any matter in which the member or family member of the member has any financial gain or interest.

(d) All acts, actions, and votes taken by such local boards and commissions between January 1, 1991 and December 31, 1993 are affirmed and ratified.

§ 36-25-10. Representation of client or constituent before board, regulatory body, department, etc.

If a public official or public employee, or family member of the public employee or family member of the public official, or a business with which the person is associated, represents a client or constituent for a fee before any quasi-judicial board or commission, regulatory body, or executive department or agency, notice of the representation shall be given within 10 days after the first day of the appearance. Notice shall be filed with the commission in the manner prescribed by it. No member of the Legislature shall for a fee, reward, or other compensation represent any person, firm, or corporation before the Public Service Commission or the State Board of Adjustment.

§ 36-25-11. Public officials or employees entering into contracts which are to be paid out of government funds

Unless exempt pursuant to Alabama competitive bid laws or otherwise permitted by law, no public official or public employee, or a member of the household of the public employee or the public official, and no business with which the person is associated shall enter into any contract to provide goods or services which is to be paid in whole or in part out of state, county, or municipal funds unless the contract has been awarded through a process of competitive bidding and a copy of the contract is filed with the commission. All such contract awards shall be made as a result of original bid takings, and no awards from negotiations after bidding shall be allowed. A copy of each contract, regardless of the amount, entered into by a public official, public employee, a member of the household of the public employee or the public official, and any business with which the person is associated shall be filed with the commission within 10 days after the contract has been entered into.

§ 36-25-12. Offering, soliciting, etc., thing of value to or by member of regulatory body

No person shall offer or give to a member or employee of a governmental agency, board, or commission that regulates a business with which the person is associated, and no member or employee of a regulatory body, shall solicit or accept a thing of value while the member or employee is associated with the regulatory body other than in the ordinary course of business. In addition to the foregoing, the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Industries and any candidate for the office of commissioner may not accept a campaign contribution from a person associated with a business regulated by the department.

§ 36-25-13. Actions of former public officials or public employees prohibited for two years after departure[14]

(a) No public official shall serve for a fee as a lobbyist or otherwise represent clients, including his or her employer before the board, agency, commission, department, or legislative body, of which he or she is a former member for a period of two years after he or she leaves such membership. For the purposes of this subsection, such prohibition shall not include a former member of the Alabama judiciary who as an attorney represents a client in a legal, non-lobbying capacity.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a), no public official elected to a term of office shall serve for a fee as a lobbyist or otherwise represent clients, including his or her employer, before the board, agency, commission, department, or legislative body of which he or she is a former member for a period of two years following the term of office for which he or she was elected, irrespective of whether the member left the office prior to the expiration of the term to which he or she was elected. For the purposes of this subsection, such prohibition shall not include a former member of the Alabama judiciary who as an attorney represents a client in a legal, non-lobbying capacity.

(c)~~**(b)**~~ No public employee shall serve for a fee as a lobbyist or otherwise represent clients, including his or her employer before the board, agency, commission, or department, of which he or she is a former employee for a period of two years after he or she leaves such employment. For the purposes of this subsection, such prohibition shall not include a former employee of the Alabama judiciary who as an attorney represents a client in a legal, non-lobbying capacity.

(d)~~**(c)**~~ No public official, director, assistant director, department or division chief, purchasing or procurement agent having the authority to make purchases, or any person who participates in the negotiation or approval of contracts, grants, or awards or any person who negotiates or approves contracts, grants, or awards shall enter into, solicit, or negotiate a contract, grant, or award with the governmental agency of which the person was a member or employee for a period of two years after he or she leaves the membership or employment of such governmental agency.

(e)~~**(d)**~~ No public official or public employee who personally participates in the direct regulation, audit, or investigation of a private business, corporation, partnership, or individual shall within two years of his or her departure from such employment solicit or accept employment with such private business, corporation, partnership, or individual.

(f)~~**(e)**~~ No former public official or public employee of the state may, within two years after termination of office or employment, act as attorney for any person other than himself or herself or the state, or aid, counsel, advise, consult or assist in representing any other person, in connection with any judicial proceeding or other matter in which the state is a party or has a direct and substantial interest and in which the former public official or public employee participated personally and substantially as a public official or employee or which was within or under the public official or public employee's official responsibility as an official or employee. This prohibition shall extend to all judicial proceedings or other matters in which the state is a

[14] This section was modified by Act No. 2014-440.

party or has a direct and substantial interest, whether arising during or subsequent to the public official or public employee's term of office or employment.

(g)~~(f)~~ Nothing in this chapter shall be deemed to limit the right of a public official or public employee to publicly or privately express his or her support for or to encourage others to support and contribute to any candidate, political committee as defined in Section 17-22A-2, referendum, ballot question, issue, or constitutional amendment.

§ 36-25-14. Filing of statement of economic interests[15]

(a) A statement of economic interests shall be completed and filed in accordance with this chapter with the commission no later than April 30 of each year covering the period of the preceding calendar year by each of the following:

(1) All elected public officials at the state, county, or municipal level of government or their instrumentalities.

(2) Any person appointed as a public official and any person employed as a public employee at the state, county, or municipal level of government or their instrumentalities who occupies a position whose base pay is ~~fifty thousand dollars ($50,000)~~ seventy-five thousand dollars ($75,000) or more annually, as adjusted by the commission by January 31 of each year to reflect changes in the U.S. Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index, or a successor index.

(3) All candidates, ~~simultaneously with the date he or she becomes a candidate as defined in Section 17-22A-2, or the date the candidate files his or her qualifying papers, whichever comes first~~ provided the statement is filed on the date the candidate files his or her qualifying papers or, in the case of an independent candidate, on the date the candidate complies with the requirements of Section 17-9-3.

(4) Members of the Alabama Ethics Commission; appointed members of boards and commissions having statewide jurisdiction (but excluding members of solely advisory boards).

(5) All full-time nonmerit employees, other than those employed in maintenance, clerical, secretarial, or other similar positions.

(6) Chief clerks and chief managers.

(7) Chief county clerks and chief county managers.

(8) Chief administrators.

(9) Chief county administrators.

(10) Any public official or public employee whose primary duty is to invest public funds.

(11) Chief administrative officers of any political subdivision.

(12) Chief and assistant county building inspectors.

(13) Any county or municipal administrator with power to grant or deny land development permits.

(14) Chief municipal clerks.

---

[15] This section was modified by Act Nos. 2012-509 and 2015-495. The 2015 revisions are highlighted in gray.

(15) Chiefs of police.

(16) Fire chiefs.

(17) City and county school superintendents and school board members.

(18) City and county school principals or administrators.

(19) Purchasing or procurement agents having the authority to make any purchase.

(20) Directors and assistant directors of state agencies.

(21) Chief financial and accounting directors.

(22) Chief grant coordinators.

(23) Each employee of the Legislature or of agencies, including temporary committees and commissions established by the Legislature, other than those employed in maintenance, clerical, secretarial, or similar positions.

(24) Each employee of the Judicial Branch of government, including active supernumerary district attorneys and judges, other than those employed in maintenance, clerical, secretarial, or other similar positions.

(25) Every full-time public employee serving as a supervisor.

(b) Unless otherwise required by law, no public employee occupying a position earning less than ~~fifty thousand dollars ($50,000)~~ seventy-five thousand dollars ($75,000) per year shall be required to file a statement of economic interests, as adjusted by the commission by January 31 of each year to reflect changes in the U.S. Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index, or a successor index. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) or any other provision of this chapter, no coach of an athletic team of any four-year institution of higher education which receives state funds shall be required to include any income, donations, gifts, or benefits, other than salary, on the statement of economic interests, if the income, donations, gifts, or benefits are a condition of the employment contract. Such statement shall be made on a form made available by the commission. The duty to file the statement of economic interests shall rest with the person covered by this chapter. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to exclude any public employee or public official from this chapter regardless of whether they are required to file a statement of economic interests. The statement shall contain the following information on the person making the filing:

(1) Name, residential address, business; name, address, and business of living spouse and dependents; name of living adult children; name of parents and siblings; name of living parents of spouse. Undercover law enforcement officers may have their residential addresses and the names of family members removed from public scrutiny by filing an affidavit stating that publicizing this information would potentially endanger their families.

(2) A list of occupations to which one third or more of working time was given during previous reporting year by the public official, public employee, or his or her spouse.

(3) A listing of total combined household income of the public official or public employee during the most recent reporting year as to income from salaries, fees, dividends, profits, commissions, and other compensation and listing the names of each business and the income derived from such business in the following categorical amounts: less than one thousand dollars ($1,000); at least one thousand dollars ($1,000) and less than ten thousand dollars ($10,000); at least ten thousand dollars ($10,000) and less than fifty thousand dollars ($50,000); at least fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) and less than one hundred fifty thousand dollars ($150,000); at least one hundred fifty thousand dollars ($150,000) and less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000); or at least two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000) or more. The person reporting shall also name any business or subsidiary thereof in which he or she or his or her spouse or dependents, jointly or severally, own five percent or more of the stock or in which he or she or his or her spouse or dependents serves as an officer, director, trustee, or consultant where the service provides income of at least one thousand dollars ($1,000) and less than five thousand dollars ($5,000); or at least five thousand dollars ($5,000) or more for the reporting period.

(4) If the filing public official or public employee, or his or her spouse, has engaged in a business during the last reporting year which provides legal, accounting, medical or health related, real estate, banking, insurance, educational, farming, engineering, architectural management, or other professional services or consultations, then the filing party shall report the number of clients of such business in each of the following categories and the income in categorical amounts received during the reporting period from the combined number of clients in each category: Electric utilities, gas utilities, telephone utilities, water utilities, cable television companies, intrastate transportation companies, pipeline companies, oil or gas exploration companies, or both, oil and gas retail companies, banks, savings and loan associations, loan or finance companies, or both, manufacturing firms, mining companies, life insurance companies, casualty insurance companies, other insurance companies, retail companies, beer, wine or liquor companies or distributors, or combination thereof, trade associations, professional associations, governmental associations, associations of public employees or public officials, counties, and any other businesses or associations that the commission may deem appropriate. Amounts received from combined clients in each category shall be reported in the following categorical amounts: Less than one thousand dollars ($1,000); more than one thousand dollars ($1,000) and less than ten thousand dollars ($10,000); at least ten thousand dollars ($10,000) and less than twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000); at least twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000) and less than fifty thousand dollars ($50,000); at least fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) and less than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000); at least one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000) and less than one hundred fifty thousand dollars ($150,000); at least one hundred fifty thousand dollars ($150,000) and less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000); or at least two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000) or more.

(5) If retainers are in existence or contracted for in any of the above categories of clients, a listing of the categories along with the anticipated income to be expected annually from each category of clients shall be shown in the following categorical amounts: Less than one thousand dollars ($1,000); at least one thousand dollars ($1,000) and less than five thousand dollars ($5,000); or at least five thousand dollars ($5,000) or more.

(6) If real estate is held for investment or revenue production by a public official, his or her spouse or dependents, then a listing thereof in the following fair market value categorical amounts: Under fifty thousand dollars ($50,000); at least fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) and less than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000); at least one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000) and less than one hundred fifty thousand dollars ($150,000); at least one hundred fifty thousand dollars ($150,000) and less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000); at least two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000) or more. A listing of annual gross rent and lease income on real estate shall be made in the following categorical amounts: Less than ten thousand dollars ($10,000); at least ten thousand dollars ($10,000) and less than fifty thousand dollars ($50,000); fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) or more. If a public official or a business in which the person is associated received rent or lease income from any governmental agency in Alabama, specific details of the lease or rent agreement shall be filed with the commission.

(7) A listing of indebtedness to businesses operating in Alabama showing types and number of each as follows: Banks, savings and loan associations, insurance companies, mortgage firms, stockbrokers and brokerages or bond firms; and the indebtedness to combined organizations in the following categorical amounts: Less than twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000); twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000) and less than fifty thousand dollars ($50,000); fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) and less than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000); one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000) and less than one hundred fifty thousand dollars ($150,000); one hundred fifty thousand dollars ($150,000) and less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000); two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000) or more. The commission may add additional business to this listing. Indebtedness associated with the homestead of the person filing is exempted from this disclosure requirement.

(c) Filing required by this section shall reflect information and facts in existence at the end of the reporting year.

(d) If the information required herein is not filed as required, the commission shall notify the public official or public employee concerned as to his or her failure to so file and the public official or public employee shall have 10 days to file the report after receipt of the notification. The commission may, in its discretion, assess a fine of ten dollars ($10) a day, not to exceed one thousand dollars ($1,000), for failure to file timely.

(e) A person who intentionally violates any financial disclosure filing requirement of this chapter shall be subject to administrative fines imposed by the commission, or shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor, or both.

Any person who unintentionally neglects to include any information relating to the financial disclosure filing requirements of this chapter shall have 90 days to file an amended statement of economic interests without penalty.

§ 36-25-15. Candidates required to file statements of economic interests; official to notify commission of name of candidate; failure to submit statement[16]

(a) Candidates at every level of government shall file a completed statement of economic interests for the previous calendar year with the ~~appropriate election official~~ State Ethics Commission simultaneously with ~~the date he or she becomes a candidate as defined in Section 17-22A-2 or~~ the date such candidate files his or her qualifying papers with the appropriate election official~~, whichever date occurs first. Such election official shall within five days forward the statement of economic interests of the candidate to the commission.~~ or in the case of an independent candidate, the date the person complies with the requirements of Section 17-9-3. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to require a second filing of the person's statement of economic interests if a current statement of economic interests is on file with the commission.

(b) Each election official who receives a declaration of candidacy or petition to appear on the ballot for election from a candidate ~~and each official who nominates a person to serve as a public official~~ shall, within five days of the receipt~~ or nomination~~, notify the commission of the name of the candidate, as defined in this chapter, and the date on which the person became a candidate~~ or was nominated as a public official~~. The commission shall, within five business days of receipt of such notification, notify the election official whether the candidate has complied with the provisions of this section.

(c) Other provisions of the law notwithstanding, if a candidate does not submit a statement of economic interests or when applicable, an amended statement of economic interests in accordance with the requirements of this chapter, the name of the person shall not appear on the ballot and the candidate shall be deemed not qualified as a candidate in that election. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the commission may, for good cause shown, allow the candidate an additional five days to file such statement of economic interests. If a candidate is deemed not qualified, the appropriate election official shall remove the name of the candidate from the ballot.

[16] This section was modified by Act No. 2015-495.

§ 36-25-16. Reports by persons who are related to public officials or public employees and who represent persons before regulatory body or contract with state

(a) When any citizen of the state or business with which he or she is associated represents for a fee any person before a regulatory body of the executive branch, he or she shall report to the commission the name of any adult child, parent, spouse, brother, or sister who is a public official or a public employee of that regulatory body of the executive branch.

(b) When any citizen of the state or business with which the person is associated enters into a contract for the sale of goods or services to the State of Alabama or any of its agencies or any county or municipality and any of their respective agencies in amounts exceeding seven thousand five hundred dollars ($7,500), he or she shall report to the commission the names of any adult child, parent, spouse, brother, or sister who is a public official or public employee of the agency or department with whom the contract is made.

(c) This section shall not apply to any contract for the sale of goods or services awarded through a process of public notice and competitive bidding.

(d) Each regulatory body of the executive branch, or any agency of the State of Alabama shall be responsible for notifying citizens affected by this chapter of the requirements of this section.

§ 36-25-17. Reports of violations; cooperation of agency heads

(a) Every governmental agency head shall within 10 days file reports with the commission on any matters that come to his or her attention in his or her official capacity which constitute a violation of this chapter.

(b) Governmental agency heads shall cooperate in every possible manner in connection with any investigation or hearing, public or private, which may be conducted by the commission.

§ 36-25-18. Registration of lobbyists required; filing of supplemental registration

(a) Every lobbyist shall register by filing a form prescribed by the commission no later than January 31 of each year or within 10 days after the first undertaking requiring such registration. Each lobbyist, except public employees who are lobbyists, shall pay an annual fee of one hundred dollars ($100) on or before January 31 of each year or within 10 days of the first undertaking requiring such registration.

(b) The registration shall be in writing and shall contain the following information:

> **(1)** The registrant's full name and business address.
>
> **(2)** The registrant's normal business and address.
>
> **(3)** The full name and address of the registrant's principal or principals.
>
> **(4)** The listing of the categories of subject matters on which the registrant is to communicate directly with a member of the legislative body to influence legislation or legislative action.
>
> **(5)** If a registrant's activity is done on behalf of the members of a group other than a corporation, a categorical disclosure of the number of persons of the group as follows: 1-5; 6-10; 11-25; over 25.
>
> **(6)** A statement signed by each principal that he or she has read the registration, knows its contents and has authorized the registrant to be a lobbyist in his or her behalf as specified therein, and that no compensation will be paid to the registrant contingent upon passage or defeat of any legislative measure.

(c) A registrant shall file a supplemental registration indicating any substantial change or changes in the information contained in the prior registration within 10 days after the date of the change.

§ 36-25-19. Registered lobbyists and other persons required to file quarterly reports

(a) Every person registered as a lobbyist pursuant to Section 36-25-18 and every principal employing any lobbyist shall file with the commission a report provided by the commission pertaining to the activities set out in that section. The report shall be filed with the commission no later than January 31, April 30, July 31, and October 31 for each preceding calendar quarter, and contain, but not be limited to, the following information:

> **(1)** The cost of those items excluded from the definition of a thing of value which are described in Section 36-25-1(32)b. and which are expended within a 24-hour period on a public official, public employee, and members of his or her respective household in excess of two hundred fifty dollars ($250) with the name or names of the recipient or recipients and the date of the expenditure.
>
> **(2)** The nature and date of any financial transaction between the public official, candidate, or member of the household of such public official or candidate and the lobbyist or principal of a value in excess of five hundred dollars ($500) in the prior quarter, excluding those financial transactions which are required to be reported by candidates under the Fair Campaign Practices Act as provided in Chapter 22A (commencing with Section 17-22A-1) of Title 17.
>
> **(3)** A detailed statement showing the exact amount of any loan given or promised to a public official, candidate, public official or candidate.
>
> **(4)** A detailed statement showing any direct business association or partnership with any public official, candidate, or members of the household of such public official or candidate; provided, however, that campaign expenditures shall not be deemed a business association or partnership.

(b) Any person not otherwise deemed a lobbyist pursuant to this chapter who negotiates or attempts to negotiate a contract, sells or attempts to sell goods or services, engages or attempts to engage in a financial transaction with a public official or public employee in their official capacity and who within a calendar day expends in excess of two hundred fifty dollars ($250) on such public employee, public official, and his or her respective household shall file a detailed quarterly report of the expenditure with the commission.

(c) Any other provision of this chapter to the contrary notwithstanding, no organization whose officer or employee serves as a public official under this chapter shall be required to report expenditures or reimbursement paid to such officer or employee in the performance of the duties with the organization.

§ 36-25-20. Filing of notice of termination of lobbying activities; effect of notice as to requirement for filing of reports

(a) A person who ceases to engage in activities requiring registration pursuant to Section 36-25-18 shall file a written, verified statement with the commission acknowledging the termination of activities. The notice shall be effective immediately.

(b) A person who files a notice of termination pursuant to this section shall file the reports required pursuant to Sections 36-25-18 and 36-25-19 for any reporting period during which he or she was registered pursuant to this chapter.

§ 36-25-21. Reports constitute public records; reports available for public inspection

All reports filed pursuant to Sections 36-25-18 to 36-25-20, inclusive, are public records and shall be made available for public inspection during regular business hours.

§ 36-25-22. Certain provisions not to be construed as affecting certain professional services

Sections 36-25-18 to 36-25-21, inclusive, shall not be construed as affecting professional services in drafting bills or in advising clients and in rendering opinions as to the construction and effect of proposed or pending legislation, executive action, rules, or regulations, where those professional services are not otherwise connected with legislative, executive, or regulatory action.

§ 36-25-23. Lobbying activities prohibited during elected term of office; floor privileges of former members of Legislature; solicitation of lobbyists by public officials or employees; contracts to provide lobbying services contingent upon legislative action[17]

(a) No public official elected to a term of office shall serve for a fee as a lobbyist or otherwise represent a client, including his or her employer, before any legislative body or any branch of state or local government, including the executive and judicial branches of government, and including the Legislature of Alabama or any board, agency, commission, or department thereof, during the term or remainder of the term for which the official was elected. For purposes of this subsection, such prohibition shall not include a former member of the Alabama Judiciary who as an attorney represents a client in a legal, non-lobbying capacity.

(b)~~**(a)**~~ No former member of the House of Representatives or the Senate of the State of Alabama shall be extended floor privileges of either body in a lobbying capacity.

(c)~~**(b)**~~ No public official, public employee, or group of public officials or public employees shall solicit any lobbyist to give any thing whether or not the thing solicited is a thing of value to any person or entity for any purpose other than a campaign contribution.

(d)~~**(c)**~~ No principal or lobbyist shall accept compensation for, or enter into a contract to provide lobbying services which is contingent upon the passage or defeat of any legislative action.

[17] This section was modified by Act No. 2014-440.

§ 36-25-24. Supervisor prohibited from discharging or discriminating against employee where employee reports violation

(a) A supervisor shall not discharge, demote, transfer, or otherwise discriminate against a public employee regarding such employee's compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment based on the employee's reporting a violation, or what he or she believes in good faith to be a violation, of this chapter or giving truthful statements or truthful testimony concerning an alleged ethics violation.

(b) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed in any manner to prevent or prohibit or otherwise limit a supervisor from disciplining, discharging, transferring, or otherwise affecting the terms and conditions of a public employee's employment so long as the disciplinary action does not result from or is in no other manner connected with the public employee's filing a complaint with the commission, giving truthful statements, and truthfully testifying.

(c) No public employee shall file a complaint or otherwise initiate action against a public official or other public employee without a good faith basis for believing the complaint to be true and accurate.

(d) A supervisor who is alleged to have violated this section shall be subject to civil action in the circuit courts of this state pursuant to the Alabama Rules of Civil Procedure as promulgated by the Alabama Supreme Court.

(e) A public employee who without a good faith belief in the truthfulness and accuracy of a complaint filed against a supervisor, shall be subject to a civil action in the circuit courts in the State of Alabama pursuant to the Alabama Rules of Civil Procedure as promulgated by the Supreme Court. Additionally, a public employee who without a good faith belief in the truthfulness and accuracy of a complaint as filed against a supervisor shall be subject to appropriate and applicable personnel action.

(f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to allow a public employee to file a complaint to prevent, mitigate, lessen, or otherwise to extinguish existing or anticipated personnel action by a supervisor. A public employee who willfully files such a complaint against a supervisor shall, upon conviction, be guilty of the crime of false reporting.

§ 36-25-25. *[Previously Repealed by Act No. 1995-194]*

§ 36-25-26. False reporting for purpose of influencing legislation

No person, for the purpose of influencing legislation, may do either of the following:

(1) Knowingly or willfully make any false statement or misrepresentation of the facts to a member of the legislative or executive branch.

(2) Knowing a document to contain a false statement, cause a copy of the document to be received by a member of the legislative or executive branch without notifying the member in writing of the truth.

§ 36-25-27. Penalties; enforcement; jurisdiction, venue, judicial review; limitations period[18]

(a) **(1)** Except as otherwise provided, any person subject to this chapter who intentionally violates any provision of this chapter other than those for which a separate penalty is provided for in this section shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a Class B felony.

(2) Any person subject to this chapter who violates any provision of this chapter other than those for which a separate penalty is provided for in this section shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

(3) Any person subject to this chapter who knowingly violates any disclosure requirement of this chapter shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

(4) Any person who knowingly makes or transmits a false report or complaint pursuant to this chapter shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor and shall be liable for the actual legal expenses incurred by the respondent against whom the false report or complaint was filed.

(5) Any person who makes false statements to an employee of the commission or to the commission itself pursuant to this chapter without reason to believe the accuracy of the statements shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

(6) Any person subject to this chapter who intentionally violates this chapter relating to secrecy shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a Class ~~A misdemeanor~~ C felony.

(7) Any person subject to this chapter who intentionally fails to disclose information required by this chapter shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

(b) The commission, if petitioned or agreed to by a respondent and the Attorney General or district attorney having jurisdiction, by unanimous vote of the members present, may administratively resolve a complaint filed pursuant to this chapter for minor violations. The commission may levy an administrative penalty not to exceed one thousand dollars ($1,000) for any minor violation of this chapter including, but not limited to, the failure to timely file a complete and correct statement of economic interests. The commission shall, in addition to any administrative penalty, order restitution in the amount of any economic loss to the state, county, and municipal governments and their instrumentalities and such restitution shall when collected be paid by the commission, to the entity having the economic loss. In any case in which an administrative penalty is imposed, the administrative penalty shall not be less than three times the amount of any economic loss to the state, county, and municipal governments or their instrumentalities or any economic gain or benefit to the public official or public employee, or whichever sum is greater. The commission, through its attorney, shall institute proceedings to recover any penalties or restitution or other such funds so ordered pursuant to this section which are not paid by, or on behalf of the public official or public employee or other person who has violated this chapter. Nothing in this section shall be deemed in any manner to prohibit the commission and the respondent from entering into a consent decree settling a complaint which has previously been designated by the commission for administrative resolution, so long as the

[18] This section was modified by Act No. 2010-763.

consent decree is approved by the commission. If the commission, the respondent, and the Attorney General or district attorney having jurisdiction, all concur that a complaint is deemed to be handled administratively, the action shall preclude any criminal prosecution pursuant to this chapter at the state, county, or municipal level.

(c) The enforcement of this chapter shall be vested in the commission; provided, however, nothing in this chapter shall be deemed to limit or otherwise prohibit the Attorney General or the district attorney for the appropriate jurisdiction from enforcing any provision of this chapter as they deem appropriate. In the event the commission, by majority vote, finds that any provision of this chapter has been violated, the alleged violation and any investigation conducted by the commission shall be referred to the district attorney of the appropriate jurisdiction or the Attorney General. The commission shall provide any and all appropriate assistance to such district attorney or Attorney General. Upon the request of such district attorney or the Attorney General, the commission may institute, prosecute, or take such other appropriate legal action regarding such violations, proceeding therein with all rights, privileges, and powers conferred by law upon assistant attorneys general.

(d) Nothing in this chapter limits the power of the state to punish any person for any conduct which otherwise constitutes a crime by statute or at common law.

(e) The penalties prescribed in this chapter do not in any manner limit the power of a legislative body to discipline its own members or to impeach public officials and do not limit the powers of agencies, departments, boards, or commissions to discipline their respective officials, members, or employees.

(f) Each circuit court of this state shall have jurisdiction of all cases and actions relative to judicial review, violations, or the enforcement of this chapter, and the venue of any action pursuant to this chapter shall be in the county in which the alleged violation occurred, or in those cases where the violation or violations occurred outside the State of Alabama, in Montgomery County. In the case of judicial review of any administrative decision of the commission, the commission's order, rule, or decision shall be taken as prima facie just and reasonable and the court shall not substitute its judgment for that of the commission as to the weight of the evidence on questions of fact except where otherwise authorized by law.

(g) Any felony prosecution brought pursuant to this chapter shall be commenced within four years after the commission of the offense.

(h) Any misdemeanor prosecution brought pursuant to this chapter shall be commenced within two years after the commission of the offense.

(i) Nothing in this chapter is intended to nor is to be construed as repealing in any way the provisions of any of the criminal laws of this state.

§ 36-25-28. Chapter not to deprive citizens of constitutional right to communicate with members of Legislature

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as to deprive any citizen, not lobbying, of the citizen's constitutional right to communicate with members of the Legislature.

§ 36-25-29. Appropriations[19]

(a) The Legislature shall appropriate such sums as it deems necessary to implement the provisions of and administer this chapter.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, and beginning with the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, the annual appropriation to the State Ethics Commission in the State General Fund Appropriations Act shall not be less than one tenth of one percent of the total State General Fund amount appropriated in the State General Fund Appropriations Act unless a lower appropriation amount is expressly approved by two-thirds of the membership of the House of Representatives and two-thirds of the membership of the Senate.

§ 36-25-30. Construction of chapter

This chapter shall be construed in pari materia with other laws dealing with the subject of ethics.

DRAFT – *June 30, 2015*

[19] This section was modified by Act No. 2011-259.