
**STATEMENT OF
AUSTIN M. LEE, VICE-CHAIR OF
PENNSYLVANIA STATE ETHICS COMMISSION; CHAIR OF
LOBBYING DISCLOSURE REGULATIONS COMMITTEE
PRESENTED TO THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**



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Honorable Thomas P. Gannon
Chairman
State Judiciary Committee
House of Representatives
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Honorable Thomas R. Caltagirone
Democratic Chairman
State Judiciary Committee
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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Chairman Gannon

Chairman Caltagirone

Members of the State Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Pennsylvania State Ethics Commission and the Lobbying Disclosure Regulations Committee, I would like to express my appreciation to the Members of the House of Representatives, Judiciary Committee for the invitation to participate in today's hearing.

I regret that my temporary absence from the Commonwealth prevents my attendance at today's hearing. I ask, however, that the Committee please accept this written statement for the record.

As background, on October 15, 1998, the Lobbying Disclosure Act (Act 93 of 1998) was signed into law by Governor Thomas J. Ridge. The Lobbying Disclosure Act vests jurisdiction

of lobbyist and principal registration and disclosure with the Pennsylvania State Ethics Commission. The Commission will have administration and enforcement responsibilities under the new law. Although the registration and disclosure provisions of the law take effect on August 1, 1999, a mandate that Regulations be promulgated took effect immediately.

In this respect, the law provides that regulations must be drafted and submitted to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission within 180 days. As part of the law, a Regulations Committee was established by the General Assembly in order to accomplish this goal. The Committee is comprised of the Chairperson of the Ethics Commission, the Secretary of Senate, the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives, the Attorney General, the Secretary of the Commonwealth, the Auditor General, and the General Counsel, or their respective designees. As a result of the collective efforts of the Committee Members, the Regulations were drafted and submitted in a timely fashion. They followed diligent staff effort, a public hearing held on January 13, 1999, to receive public comment, and extended discussions by the Committee. The committee approved the Regulations unanimously in the form presently before you. There is little I can add to the proposed regulations in your hands for comment pursuant to the statutorily mandated regulatory review process. They speak for themselves.

It was our intention that the regulations be fair, definitive, easily understood and consistent with the legislative intent expressed in the Lobbying Disclosure Act; we hope we have achieved those goals. The regulatory review process is designed to elicit comments on the Committee's effort; we welcome any such comments all of which will be fully considered as the

review process moves forward.

I have asked John J. Contino, Executive Director of the State Ethics Commission to deliver my statement to you. Mr. Contino will also be able to advise you as to the measures being taken to implement the Act after the Regulations become final. Such steps include, most importantly, the availability of advices and opinions as to the propriety of conduct as limited or regulated by the law and the substantial educational efforts which will be available to interested parties.

Respectfully submitted,

Austin M. Lee, Esquire
Vice-Chair, State Ethics Commission
Chair, Lobbying Disclosure Regulations Committee