

State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DATE: July 14, 2014

SUBJECT: Lobbyist campaign contributions

This document contains information about lobbyist campaign contributions in a convenient question-and-answer format. For additional information, please consult Guidelines [1249](#) and [1250](#) on the G.A.B. website or contact the Ethics Division staff.

Lobbyists furnishing campaign contributions to candidates

Q. When may a lobbyist furnish a personal campaign contribution from the lobbyist's own funds to a candidate?

A. To a candidate for partisan state office (or a partisan elected state official running for any office) between the first day for circulating nomination papers (April 15 for the general election) and the date of the candidate's election, except as noted below. To a candidate for any other office (as long as the candidate is not currently a partisan elected state official) at any time.

Q. Are there additional restrictions for furnishing a personal campaign contribution from the lobbyist's own funds to a legislative candidate?

A. Yes. A lobbyist may furnish a personal campaign contribution to a candidate for the Legislature (whether an incumbent or non-incumbent) during the above "window" but only after the Legislature has concluded its final floor period. This "window" for furnishing a contribution closes during any special or extraordinary session.

Q. Do these additional restrictions apply to a Legislator running for another partisan office?

A. No, only the April 15 restriction applies. The additional restrictions above only apply to candidates for legislative office.

Q. When may a lobbyist furnish a PAC or conduit contribution to a candidate?

A. A lobbyist may furnish a PAC or conduit contribution to a candidate running for any office at any time.

Q. What does "furnishing" mean?

A. "Furnishing" means to deliver or convey, in person or by writing, or by signing a contribution check.

Q. When may a lobbyist and candidate participate in discussions about PAC or conduit contributions?

A. At any time.

Q. When may a PAC furnish a campaign contribution to a candidate?

A. At any time.

Q. Even if the PAC is controlled by a lobbying principal?

A. Yes.

Q. When may a conduit furnish a campaign contribution to a candidate?

A. At any time, unless the contribution is from a lobbyist's personal funds. If it is from a lobbyist, all the timing restrictions on a lobbyist furnishing a personal contribution apply.

Q. What services may a lobbyist furnish to a candidate apart from furnishing a campaign contribution?

A. A lobbyist may endorse a candidate, be listed as a sponsor of a fundraising event, and provide uncompensated personal (non-professional) services to a campaign.

Q. When may a lobbyist furnish a contribution to a PAC, political party, or legislative campaign committee?

A. At any time. The lobbyist may furnish either a personal contribution or contributions from a PAC or conduit.

Q. May a lobbyist arrange a fundraising event for a legislator's personal campaign committee?

A. Yes, provided it is as a volunteer or the lobbyist's time is reimbursed through a PAC.

Candidates soliciting campaign contributions from lobbyists

Q. When may a candidate ask a lobbyist to furnish a personal campaign contribution from the lobbyist's own funds?

A. During the time during which the intended recipient may accept such a personal contribution from a lobbyist.

Q. When may a candidate ask a lobbyist to furnish a PAC or conduit contribution?

A. At any time.

Q. May a candidate ask a lobbyist for a non-lobbyist contact from whom the candidate may request a PAC or conduit contribution?

A. Yes.

Q. May a candidate ask a lobbyist to convey information about a fundraiser to others?

A. Yes.

Q. May a candidate send an invitation to a fundraiser to a lobbyist?

A. Yes, but if the invitation is sent outside of the “window” it should specify that it is not a solicitation of a lobbyist’s personal contribution.

Q. May a legislative campaign committee invite a lobbyist to a fundraiser for the legislative campaign committee?

A. Yes, but neither a legislator nor a legislative employee may solicit a personal campaign contribution from a lobbyist except during permitted times, even if it is for a legislative campaign committee or a PAC.

Q. May a legislative campaign committee’s employee solicit contributions to the legislative campaign committee?

A. Yes. Statutes do not prevent a person not employed by the Legislature but employed by any of the four legislative campaign committees to solicit a lobbyist for a contribution to the legislative campaign committee at any time.

Q. May a lobbyist arrange a fundraising event for a legislative campaign committee?

A. Yes, a lobbyist may make arrangements for and obtain potential contributors for a fundraising event for a legislative campaign committee.

Q. May a lobbyist ask a candidate for advice about where to direct campaign contributions?

A. Yes. Statutes do not prevent a candidate’s replying to a communication from a lobbyist asking who should be the recipients of PAC or conduit contributions.