

January through December 1994

Complaints and Investigations under Wisconsin's Ethics Code and Lobbying Law

The Ethics Board may investigate possible violations of the Ethics Code and lobbying law whenever circumstances warrant and may file complaints alleging violations whenever it concludes there is probable cause to do so.

During the period January through December 1994, the Board completed investigations of the following matters pertaining to possible violations of the statutorily prescribed standards of conduct for state officials, lobbyists, and principals.

PRINCIPAL'S FURNISHING CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS. Based on information received, the Ethics Board investigated whether Wisconsin Professional Police Association, a lobbying principal, furnished campaign contributions to legislators at a time not permitted by the lobbying law. The Association admitted violations of the lobbying law and paid \$2,500 as a civil forfeiture in settlement of the matter. [In the matter of the Wisconsin Professional Police Association, 93-SC-06]

PRINCIPAL'S FURNISHING A CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION. Based on information received, the Ethics Board investigated whether campaign contributions furnished by a political action committee were, in reality, contributions from a lobbying principal. The Ethics Board concluded the political action committee was independent of the principal and that there was no probable cause to proceed further in the matter. [93-SC-08]

PRINCIPAL'S FURNISHING A CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION. In light of published accounts, the Ethics Board investigated whether Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith, Inc., a registered principal under the lobbying law, had made an improper campaign contribution to Governor Thompson's campaign committee. The Board found that Merrill Lynch made a contribution at a time not permitted by the lobbying law. Governor Thompson returned the contribution to Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith, Inc., which forfeited \$5,000 to the State of Wisconsin. [In the matter of Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith, Inc., 93-SC-09B]

PRINCIPAL'S FURNISHING A CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION. In light of published accounts, the Ethics Board investigated whether a registered principal under the lobbying law had made an improper campaign contribution to Governor Thompson's campaign committee. The Board concluded there was not probable cause to believe that a violation of the lobbying law occurred. [93-SC-09C]

PRINCIPAL'S FURNISHING CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS. In light of published accounts, the Ethics Board investigated whether the Wisconsin Association of Life Underwriters, a registered principal under the lobbying law had made an improper campaign contribution to Governor Thompson's campaign committee. The Board found that the Association made contributions of \$30 and \$3,000 at a time not permitted by the lobbying law. Governor Thompson returned the contribution to the Wisconsin Association of Life Underwriters, which forfeited \$3,100 to the State of Wisconsin. [In the matter of Wisconsin Association of Life Underwriters, 93-SC-09E]

PRINCIPAL'S FURNISHING A CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION. In light of published accounts, the Ethics Board investigated whether a registered principal under the lobbying law, had made an improper campaign contribution to Governor Thompson's campaign committee. The Board concluded there was not probable cause to believe that a violation of the lobbying law occurred. [93-SC-09J]

PRINCIPAL'S FURNISHING A CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION. Based on information received from a legislator who had received the campaign contribution, the Ethics Board investigated whether Miller Brewing Company had furnished the campaign contribution at a time not permitted by the lobbying law. On the Board's advice, the legislator returned the campaign contribution and Miller Brewing Company admitted a violation of the lobbying law and forfeited \$250. [In the matter of Miller Brewing Company, 93-SC-10]

IMPROPER USE OF OFFICE. In light of published reports, the Ethics Board investigated whether an official was involved in rule making that would benefit a company he owned. The Ethics Board concluded there was not probable cause to believe that the official violated the ethics code and that further actions by the Board were not warranted. [94-SC-01]

IMPROPER USE OF OFFICE. In response to a complaint, the Ethics Board investigated whether a legislator was involved in legislation that would benefit a company for which he is an authorized agent. The Ethics Board concluded there was no probable cause to believe that a violation of the ethics code occurred and that further actions by the Board were not warranted. [94-SC-02]

IMPROPER USE OF OFFICE. In response to a complaint, the Ethics Board investigated whether a legislator was using state resources for the private benefit of an organization with which the legislator was associated. The Ethics Board concluded there was no probable cause to believe that a violation of the ethics code occurred. [94-SC-03]

AGENCY OFFICIALS' SOLICITATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS. Based on published reports, the Ethics Board investigated whether state agency officials had illegally solicited contributions for a conference the agency was sponsoring from businesses regulated by the agency. The Board concluded there was no probable cause to believe that agency officials violated the ethics code or lobbying law. However, the Board advised agency officials to pursue the

statutory avenue of requesting the Department of Development to solicit needed support for conferences. [94-SC-04]

LOBBYING WITHOUT REGISTRATION AND AUTHORIZATION. In response to information received, the Ethics Board investigated whether a lobbyist had lobbied for organizations without those organizations registering and authorizing the individual to lobby on their behalf. The Board concluded that there was no probable cause to believe a violation of the lobbying law occurred. [93-LL-09]

LOBBYING WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION AND LICENSE. In response to a complaint, the Ethics Board investigated whether an individual had lobbied without being licensed or authorized to lobby on behalf of a principal. The Board concluded that there was not probable cause to believe a violation of the lobbying law occurred. [93-LL-10]

LOBBYING WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION AND LICENSE. As a result of the Board's review of its records of organizations registered to lobby, the Ethics Board investigated whether an individual had lobbied without being authorized to lobby on behalf of any principal. The Board concluded that there was not probable cause to believe that a violation of the lobbying law occurred. [94-LL-01]

LOBBYING WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION. As a result of the Board's review of its records of organizations registered to lobby, the Ethics Board investigated whether an individual had lobbied without being authorized to lobby on behalf of an organization. The Board required the organization to file an amendment to its registration and took no further action. [94-LL-02]

The Board in this period initiated one investigation pertaining to the filing of late or incomplete Statements of Economic Interests.