

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 1996, 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.

LOBBYIST'S FURNISHING CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS IN SPOUSE'S NAME. Lobbyist Chet Gerlach acknowledged violating Wisconsin's lobbying law and paid a \$5,000 penalty for the infraction. Gerlach acknowledged that during 1993 through 1996 he furnished, in his spouse's name, campaign contributions to partisan elected state officials totaling \$2,900 at times the *Statutes* forbid a lobbyist to contribute. [96-SC-03C]

LOBBYIST'S FURNISHING CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS. The Ethics Board found that five lobbyists had made campaign contributions during a time not permitted by the lobbying law. Each lobbyist secured the return of the improper contribution and forfeited the amount of the contribution to the State of Wisconsin. The lobbyists and penalties they paid are:

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| William Broydrick | \$1,000 |
| Cynthia Broydrick | \$1,000 |
| Michael Bolger | \$200 |
| Charles Brownlow | \$100 |
| James Sankowitz | \$100 |

[96-SC-03]

IMPROPER USE OF OFFICE. In response to a verified complaint, the Ethics Board investigated whether a public official used his office for private gain. The Ethics Board found that the facts did not support the allegations and that further actions by the Board were not warranted. [96-SC-01]

FAILURE TO AUTHORIZE A LOBBYIST. A lobbyist brought to the Board's attention a principal's failure to authorize her to lobby on the principal's behalf. The principal and lobbyist paid forfeitures of \$100 and \$50, respectively. [In the matter of Wisconsin Assisted Living Association and Cynthia Broydrick, 96-LL-01]

The Board in this period collected \$200 in forfeitures for late filing of Statements of Economic Interests and \$575 for late filing of Statements of Lobbying Activities and Expenditures. This money was deposited in the State Common School Fund.