

January through December 1997

# 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 1997, 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.

**OFFICIAL'S PRIVATE INTEREST IN OFFICIAL ACTION.** The Board investigated whether a state public official had violated Wisconsin's Ethics Code by participating in official actions that would privately benefit that official. The Board determined that there was no credible basis that the official used his or her position for personal benefit. [97-SC-04]

**LOBBYING PRINCIPAL FURNISHING TRAVEL AND LODGING TO AN ELECTED STATE OFFICIAL FOR PRIVATE BENEFIT.** The Board investigated whether a lobbying principal provided travel and lodging to an elected state public official for the official's private benefit. The Board determined that there was not sufficient evidence to substantiate the allegation. [97-SC-03]

**OFFICIAL'S CONFLICT OF INTEREST.** The Board investigated whether a state public official entering a service contract with an organization doing business with the official's agency represented a conflict of interest. The Board advised the official either to give up the private contract or resign the position. [97-SC-02]

**FORMER OFFICIAL REPRESENTING PRIVATE INTEREST BEFORE AGENCY.** The Board investigated whether a former state public official had represented a private interest for pay before the official's agency within 12 months after leaving office. The Board determined that there was not sufficient evidence to substantiate the allegation. [97-SC-01]

**PRINCIPAL'S FAILURE TO REPORT LOBBYING EXPENSES.** The Board investigated whether a lobbying principal had failed to report certain lobbying expenditures. The Board found that the expenditures in question were not required to be reported as lobbying expenditures. [97-LL-01]

**LATE STATEMENTS OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES AND EXPENDITURES.** The Lake Schooner Education Association paid a \$25 penalty for late filing of its January – June 1997 Statement of Lobbying Activities and Expenditures. The following five lobbying organizations paid penalties for filing their Statements of Lobbying Activities and Expenditures for the second half of 1996 late: American Managed Care Pharmacy Association; Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin, Inc.; GTECH Corporation; and Pictorial, Inc. all paid penalties of \$25; Sandoz Pharmaceuticals Corporation paid a penalty of \$100.

The Board in this period collected \$80 in forfeitures for late filing of Statements of Economic Interests.

The Ethics Board deposits the penalties it collects in the state school fund.