

Wisconsin Ethics Board

January through December 2006

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

The Ethics Board investigates possible violations of the Ethics Code and lobbying law whenever circumstances warrant; no complaint is necessary. On its own authority the Board may issue subpoenas to require testimony and the production of documents. The Ethics Board may file complaints alleging violations whenever it discovers probable cause to believe that a person has violated a law that the Board administers.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT MATTERS MERITING PENALTIES

INVESTIGATIONS CONCLUDING SANCTIONS NOT MERITED

CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISER HOSTED BY POLITICAL APPOINTEE. The Ethics Board investigated whether the Department of Transportation's Deputy Secretary Ruben Anthony violated any law administered by the Ethics Board by hosting a fundraiser for Governor Doyle to which individuals employed by businesses seeking contract with the Department of Transportation were invited. The Board found no evidence of a violation of the "pay to play" statute or the of state resources in organizing the event.

[QA-2005-23]

CONFLICT OF INTEREST. The Ethics Board investigated whether a legislator voted on a matter affecting an industry in which the legislator had a substantial financial interest. The Board found that, although the legislator's family owned a business in the industry, the legislator did not have an ownership interest and that the legislator's business was not affected by the legislation.

[QA-2005-25]

LEGISLATIVE AIDE USING STATE COMPUTER FOR DRAFTING LITIGATION DOCUMENTS. The Ethics Board investigated allegations that a legislative aide used a state computer while on state time to draft documents relating to litigation unrelated to legislative business. The Board did not find evidence to support the allegation.

[QA-2006-02]

ETHICS BOARD PENALIZES LOBBYISTS FOR IMPROPER CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS. The Ethics Board found that two lobbyists had made campaign contributions to candidates 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, penalties they paid, and the candidates to whom the contributions were furnished are:

- Steve Brenton \$100 J.B. Van Hollen
- Thomas Ramsey \$100 Peg Lautenschlager

STATEMENTS OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS

LATE STATEMENTS OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS. Every official required to file a Statement of Economic Interests with the Ethics Board did so and nearly every Statement was filed by the date due. Of roughly 2,400 people filing Statements, only the following merited a penalty for filing late:

- Dennis Montabon, Reserve Judge \$10
- Ian Munro, Member, Medical Examining Board \$50

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