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ETHICS

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Sen Gary Stevens

H. Conner Thomas

Rep Chris Tuck

Gary J. Turner

Staff:

Joyce Anderson,
Administrator
269-0150

Linda Leigh, Support Staff
269-8179

Mailing address:
P. O. Box 101468
Anchorage, AK
99510-1468

Ph (907) 269-0150
Fax (907) 269-0152

Website:
<http://ethics.legis.state.ak.us>

Email:
ethics_committee@legis.state.ak.us

THE ADVISOR

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FIVE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE ACCEPTING A GIFT OF A TICKET/ADMISSION FEE TO PARTICIPATE IN A CHARITY EVENT



1

A ticket to participate in a charity event is considered a gift.

2

Determine the value of the gift.

VALUE: The market value of a ticket/admission fee is determined by the lowest value of a ticket/admission fee if there are multiple amounts. *Example:* A team of five players participates in a charity golf tournament. The admission fee ranges from \$1,000 to \$10,000 per team. Each team player is assessed a gift value of 1/5 or \$200.



3

The value of the gift must not exceed \$250 in value. If more than \$250, you must decline.

4

Have you received other gifts from the same person/entity? If so, the aggregate value of all gifts received may not exceed \$250 in value within a calendar year.

5

Check the Ethics web site to determine if the charity event has been pre-approved by Legislative Council.

—If approved, a gift of a ticket/admission fee may be accepted from a lobbyist.

—If not, you may not accept the ticket from a lobbyist.

A listing of approved charitable events is found on the Ethics web site:

<http://ethics.legis.state.ak.us/documents/sanctioning.pdf>

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ADDITIONAL CHARITY EVENT INFORMATION

There is a distinction between a ticket to a charity event and a contribution to the charity under AS 24.60.080(a)(2)(B).

❖ TICKET

- A ticket to a charity event is considered a gift.
- A ticket doesn't necessarily mean a "ticket in hand" but could also mean an admission or entry fee to participate.
- A ticket entitles the bearer to admission to the charity event, to entertainment, food or beverages or other gifts or services involved in the event which otherwise may be prohibited under AS 24.60.080(a)(2)(B).

❖ CONTRIBUTION

- A contribution to a charity does not necessarily entitle the donor to anything.
- A contribution to a charity event is considered a gift when the contribution includes admission to the event and other gifts or services.

A charity event with a short, formal presentation on an educational issue does not qualify the event as "obtaining information on a matter of legislative concern" under AS 24.60.080(c)(4).



COMMITTEE ISSUES ADVISORY OPINION 11-03

Does the Legislative Ethics Act permit a legislator or legislative employee to list, in a legislative newsletter, the name of health care providers that specialize in serving patients insured by Medicare?

The committee concluded listing the names and contact information for health care providers that specialize in serving patients insured by Medicare is permitted under certain conditions. The listing should track the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Seniors and Disabilities Services Division, own language and provides clear attribution to the department.

There must also be the existence of one or more obvious legislative purposes; i.e. guiding people in need of Medicare services to institutions, like the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Clinic, that receive substantial financial support from the state through legislative appropriation. Upon reaching a certain age, the government requires we sign up for and submit claims to Medicare. Many elderly or disabled persons face significant obstacles to obtaining information directly from Internet websites and are also among those who are most likely to rely on Medicare services for health care. A newsletter listing this information might constitute the only practical opportunity for some to obtain the information listed.

The committee stated this opinion does not guarantee that prior publication of information by a different branch of government is a prerequisite or a guarantee a legislative newsletter will comply with the Act. Each matter must be decided on its own particular facts.

The entire opinion can be viewed at: <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/search/ethics/>

Tips related to incidental campaign activities

Incidental campaign activities while on government time are permissible if the activities are part of the normal legislative duties of the employee. A legislative employee, who engages in political campaign activities other than of an incidental nature on government time, is required to take leave time for the period of campaigning.

1. If a campaign related **call** is received, take the caller's name and phone number. Leave the message for the legislator. Also, politely let the caller know that in the future they should call *Sen/Rep* at home or on his/her personal cell phone or campaign phone number as campaign related discussions are not appropriate in a legislative office.
2. If campaign related **correspondence** is received in the mail, give directly to *Sen/Rep*. (Note: Check with your *Sen/Rep* and most likely you can throw away the junk mail: i.e., fliers, advertising campaign buttons and materials and similar items.) Do not respond to the correspondence as it is not legislative related.
3. If campaign related **email** is received, forward to *Sen/Rep's* home email or campaign email. Do not respond to the campaign related correspondence as it is not legislative related. To prevent future emails of a campaign nature from the same person/entity, notify the sender the campaign email was forwarded to the legislator's home or campaign email address and state that future campaign email should be sent there as well. Delete the email from the legislator's legislative email account.
4. If **someone drops off** campaign material or a campaign check, politely let them know that in the future they should send it directly to *Sen/Rep's* home at (**address**). Leave the material or check for the legislator. Do not take any other action. It is the responsibility of the *Sen/Rep* to take appropriate action as necessary or needed.

Reference: AS 24.60.030(a)(2), AS 24.60.030(5), AS 24.60.030(h)

LEGISLATIVE EQUIPMENT

*Keep in mind, that if the legislature purchased your cell phone, computer, iPad, iPhone, etc., you may **NOT** use this equipment for campaign related activities. This restriction also applies if the legislative Office Allowance Account was used for the purchases as well.*

Disclosures:

Gift of Travel/Hospitality for Legislative Matters

AS 24.60.080(c)(4)

Important Reminder!

If you have taken a trip for a legislative matter that was paid for with other than legislative funds, you must disclose the gift within 30 days starting from the first day of travel.

This includes travel paid for by: Alaska state departments, non-profit organizations, federal agencies, and private organizations/agencies, to name a few. Additionally, the waiver of a registration fee by the agency/organization is considered a gift and must be disclosed if \$250 or more in value.

If you do not have an accounting of the costs associated with the trip, file a disclosure with the estimated costs to avoid a late filing fee. *When the costs are determined, you can amend the disclosure by contacting the Ethics Office @ 269-8179*.

When filing your disclosure online, be sure to hit the "PROCEED" button. This will allow you to review your input, make any changes, or cancel your submission.



Hit the "SUBMIT" button to finalize!



After you hit the submit button, you will immediately receive an electronic copy of your disclosure with the message,

"Thank you, your disclosure has been submitted!"



Seasonal Greeting Cards

A legislator is permitted to send "seasonal greeting cards", pursuant to AS 24.560.030(a)(2)(E).

A legislator is not prohibited from using legislative employees to prepare and send out seasonal greeting cards.

Seasonal greeting cards may be sent to constituents in the legislator's current district, to individuals residing outside of the legislator's district if the person has requested to be on the mailing list, and other individuals/organizations the legislative office has had contact with; i.e., worked on a bill or issue, for example.