



# THE ADVISOR

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE ETHICS**

**January Supplement 2018**

*Inquiring Minds Want to Know...*

*About campaigning and political activity under the Legislative Ethics Act.*

**Q: May a sitting legislator attend fundraisers in Juneau before the Legislature convenes, or after it adjourns?**

A: Yes.

**Q: May a sitting legislator attend a candidate's fundraising event in Juneau if the legislator does not donate to the candidate, or does not solicit others to attend the fundraiser or donate to the candidate?**

A: Yes. A legislator may attend a fundraiser, but they are cautioned to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. A legislator may make a contribution at a fundraiser.

**Q: May a sitting legislator attend a fundraiser, donate to a candidate, or solicit others to attend a fundraiser or donate to a candidate in other districts away from the State Capitol?**

A. Sitting legislators may contribute to a non-incumbent campaign during regular or special session (see exceptions to special session AS 24.60.031(b)), but they may not solicit others to contribute to, accept, or receive a contribution for a campaign for office at the local, state or federal level or for a political party.

**Does the distance between the State Capitol and the event make a difference?**

A. No. A legislator may not solicit, accept or receive a contribution in the capital city which is deemed to include Juneau and Douglas.

**Does the answer change when a legislator pays for such travel out of his own pocket?**

A. Yes. *Note:* Sitting legislators are never allowed to attend campaign/fundraising events when traveling on a state-funded trip. Restrictions regarding the soliciting, accepting, or receiving of contributions still apply.

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**Committee Members**

Senator John Coghill  
 Senator Dennis Egan  
 Representative Chris Tuck  
 Representative David Eastman  
 H. Conner Thomas, Chair  
 Dennis "Skip" Cook  
 Joyce M. Anderson  
 Deborah Fancher  
 Lee Holmes

Jerry Anderson, Administrator  
 Janice Stewart, Admin. Assistant

*A Thought:*

*The Legislative Ethics Act has, as an inspirational goal, to avoid even the appearance of impropriety.*



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*Inquiring Minds Want to Know...*

*About campaigning and political activity under the Legislative Ethics Act. Cont.*

**Q: May a legislator use personal money to travel to his home district and once there attend a partisan political event (e.g. local district or state party convention) as well as events related to his business as a legislator (e.g. a public town hall meeting with constituents)?**

A. Yes.

**Q: May sitting legislators attend candidate events during session in Juneau which are not specifically fundraisers, e.g. “Meet and Greets?”**

A. Yes. But legislators cannot solicit, accept, or receive a donation for a candidate or a political party no matter what the event is called.

**Would it make any difference if the candidate accepted a check or two from a different person (not a legislator) at such a “Meet and Greet?”**

A. Sitting legislators are not allowed to accept contributions to their own or another’s campaign during regular or special session. Candidates must follow APOC rules regarding contributions.

**Q: Regarding the Lincoln Day Dinners held by the Alaska Republican Party or the analogous Bartlett-Gruening Dinners held by the Alaska Democratic Party, may sitting legislators participate by only buying a ticket and attending?**

A. Yes, but ONLY if they are NOT on a state-funded trip to the location where the dinner is being held.

**By attending and participating in a fundraising auction, either by donating items, or bidding on other items?**

A. Sitting legislators may not donate items to auctions. The legislator’s name on a donated item is considered a solicitation. A Legislator is allowed to bid on auction items.

**By attending and not participating in any fundraising activity?**

A. Yes, but ONLY if they are not on a state-funded trip to the location where the dinner is being held.

**By soliciting other people to attend, donate, or bid on auction items?**

A. Soliciting others to attend, donate, or bid is a violation of the Legislative Ethics Act.

**Q: Regarding political meetings: May a sitting legislator attend local or state party functions while in Juneau, or on state-funded travel?**

A. Yes—while in Juneau. NO if on a state-funded trip.

**May they participate in fundraising activities, including donating items or bidding on items donated by others, or making donations to the local party committee or state or federal parties?**

A. Participate—yes. Donate items—no. Bidding on items donated by others—yes. Make a contribution to the local, state or federal parties—yes. But ONLY if they are NOT on a state-funded trip.

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*Inquiring Minds Want to Know...*

*About campaigning and political activity under the Legislative Ethics Act, Cont.*

**Q: May a legislator incur a conflict or prohibition by using personal funds to travel from Juneau to his home district for partisan events, but then use Legislative (or POET or office account) funds to pay for travel to return to Juneau?**

A. No portion of the trip may be paid for with state office account funds. POET funds are administered by APOC. (Contact APOC for more information.)

**Q: What do you recommend a legislator do should he receive a partisan message (e.g., notice of a legislative or gubernatorial candidate) on his legislative email account?**

A. Senders should be directed to either a personal or a campaign email account. The message may be forwarded to a personal or campaign email account for a response from that account.

**ANNUAL DISCLOSURES ARE DUE BY FEBRUARY 15, 2018!**

- Membership on a Board
- Close Economic Association
- State Benefit and Loan Program (See Appendix C in the Standards of Conduct Handbook)
- State Contracts and Leases \$5,000 or more
- Representation for Compensation

**PLEASE NOTE that Membership on a Board includes:**

| For-Profit   | Religious                           | Non-Profit                     | Educational |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Condo Assoc. | Advisory board with no voting power | Governmental or National Board |             |

***If you serve on a board with advisory, investigatory, managerial, or supervisory power, you must disclose!***

**Question of the Day**

***True or False?***

A legislator wants to thank staffers for their good work. In February they received a \$50 gift card. In March they received a \$100 gift card, and at the end of session an additional gift card worth \$100. Since each card was less than \$250, no violation occurred.

False because the aggregate amount in a calendar years equals \$250.



**DISCLAIMER**

***Information in this newsletter is given as a general overview. Your circumstances may require more specific information and advice. Please contact the ethics office if you have any questions as to whether your intended action is in compliance with the Ethics Act AS 24.60.***