

ACT 322

H.B. NO. 3726

A Bill for an Act Relating to Standards of Conduct.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. Chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding two new sections to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“§84- Filing of false charges. (a) Any person who knowingly and intentionally files a false charge with the commission, or any member of the commission who initiates action against any state official, state employee, or any other person covered by this chapter, knowing such charge to be false, shall be guilty of the crime of perjury and subject to the penalty set forth in section 710-1060.

(b) Whoever is convicted in a court of competent jurisdiction of the crime of perjury under this section, in addition to any other punishment prescribed by law thereof, shall be required by court order to reimburse the person against whom the false charge was filed for all of the person’s legal expenses and any

other expenses incurred in relation to the person's defense against the false complaint.

(c) If such charge is filed within six months prior to an election in which the accused's name appears on the ballot, the person filing the false complaint shall pay to the accused the amount set out above plus an equal amount to the general fund of the State.

(d) This section shall not supersede or preclude any other right or remedy at law available to the person falsely accused.

§84- Reporting of gifts. (a) Every legislator and employee shall file a gifts disclosure statement with the state ethics commission on June 30 of each year if all the following conditions are met:

- (1) The legislator or employee, or spouse or dependent child of a legislator or employee, received directly or indirectly from one source any gift or gifts valued singly or in the aggregate in excess of \$200, whether the gift is in the form of money, service, goods, or in any other form;
- (2) The source of the gift or gifts have interests that may be affected by official action or lack of action by the legislator or employee; and
- (3) The gift is not exempted by subsection (d) from reporting requirements under this subsection.

(b) The report shall cover the period from June 1 of the preceding calendar year through June 1 of the year of the report.

(c) The gifts disclosure statement shall contain the following information:

- (1) A description of the gift;
- (2) A good faith estimate of the value of the gift;
- (3) The date the gift was received; and
- (4) The name of the person, business entity, or organization from whom, or on behalf of whom, the gift was received.

(d) Excluded from the reporting requirements of this section are the following:

- (1) Gifts received by will or intestate succession;
- (2) Gifts received by way of distribution of any inter vivos or testamentary trust established by a spouse or ancestor;
- (3) Gifts from a spouse, fiancé, fiancée, any relative within four degrees of consanguinity or the spouse, fiancé, or fiancée of such a relative. A gift from any such person is a reportable gift if the person is acting as an agent or intermediary for any person not covered by this paragraph;
- (4) Political campaign contributions that comply with state law;
- (5) Anything available to or distributed to the public generally without regard to the official status of the recipient;
- (6) Gifts that, within 30 days after receipt, are returned to the giver or delivered to a public body or to a bona fide educational or charitable organization without the donation being claimed as a charitable contribution for tax purposes; and
- (7) Exchanges of approximately equal value on holidays, birthday, or special occasions.

(e) Failure of a legislator or employee to file a gifts disclosure statement as required by this section shall be a violation of this chapter.

(f) This section shall not affect the applicability of section 84-11."

SECTION 2. Section 84-31, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by

amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

- “(a) The ethics commission shall have the following powers and duties:
- (1) It shall prescribe forms for the disclosures required by Article XIV of the Hawaii Constitution and section 84-17 and the gifts disclosure statements required by section 84- and the statements and reports required by sections 97-2 and 97-3 and shall establish orderly procedures for implementing the requirements of those provisions.
 - (2) It shall render advisory opinions upon the request of any legislator, employee, or delegate to the constitutional convention, or person formerly holding such office or employment as to whether the facts and circumstances of a particular case constitute or will constitute a violation of the code of ethics. It shall also render advisory opinions to persons subject to chapter 97. If no advisory opinion is rendered within thirty days after the request is filed with the commission, it shall be deemed that an advisory opinion was rendered and that the facts and circumstances of that particular case do not constitute a violation of the code of ethics. The opinion rendered or deemed rendered, until amended or revoked, shall be binding on the commission in any subsequent charges concerning the legislator, employee, or delegate to the constitutional convention, or person formerly holding such office or employment, or person subject to chapter 97 who sought the opinion and acted in reliance on it in good faith, unless material facts were omitted or misstated by such persons in the request for an advisory opinion.
 - (3) It shall initiate, receive, and consider charges concerning alleged violation of this chapter, initiate or make investigation, and hold hearings.
 - (4) It may subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, and take testimony relating to matters before the commission and require the production for examination of any books or papers relative to any matter under investigation or in question before the commission. Before the commission shall exercise any of the powers authorized herein with respect to any investigation or hearings it shall by formal resolution, supported by a vote of three or more members of the commission, define the nature and scope of its inquiry.
 - (5) It may, from time to time make, amend, and repeal such rules, not inconsistent with this chapter as in the judgment of the commission seem appropriate for the carrying out of this chapter and for the efficient administration thereof, including every matter or thing required to be done or which may be done with the approval or consent or by order or under the direction or supervision of or as prescribed by the commission. The rules, when adopted as provided in chapter 91, shall have the force and effect of law.
 - (6) It shall have jurisdiction for purposes of investigation and taking appropriate action on alleged violations of this chapter in all proceedings commenced within three years of an alleged violation of this chapter by a legislator or employee or former legislator or employee. A proceeding shall be deemed commenced by the filing of a charge with the commission or by the signing of a charge by three or more members of the commission. Nothing herein shall bar proceedings against a person who by fraud or other device, prevents discovery of a violation of this chapter.

- (7) It shall distribute its publications without cost to the public and shall initiate and maintain programs with the purpose of educating the citizenry and all legislators, delegates to the constitutional convention, and employees on matters of ethics in government employment.
- (8) It shall administer any code of ethics adopted by a state constitutional convention, subject to the procedural requirements of this part and any rules adopted thereunder.
- (9) It shall perform the duties and fulfill the functions assigned to it by chapter 97, relating to registration of lobbyists.”

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved July 6, 1992.)

Note

- 1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.