

CHAPTER 13  
Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform

ARTICLE 1  
General Provisions

**SECTION 8-13-100. Definitions.**

As used in Articles 1 through 11:

- (1)(a) "Anything of value" or "thing of value" means:
- (i) a pecuniary item, including money, a bank bill, or a bank note;
  - (ii) a promissory note, bill of exchange, an order, a draft, warrant, check, or bond given for the payment of money;
  - (iii) a contract, agreement, promise, or other obligation for an advance, a conveyance, forgiveness of indebtedness, deposit, distribution, loan, payment, gift, pledge, or transfer of money;
  - (iv) a stock, bond, note, or other investment interest in an entity;
  - (v) a receipt given for the payment of money or other property;
  - (vi) a chose-in-action;
  - (vii) a gift, tangible good, chattel, or an interest in a gift, tangible good, or chattel;
  - (viii) a loan or forgiveness of indebtedness;
  - (ix) a work of art, an antique, or a collectible;
  - (x) an automobile or other means of personal transportation;
  - (xi) real property or an interest in real property, including title to realty, a fee simple or partial interest in realty including present, future, contingent, or vested interests in realty, a leasehold interest, or other beneficial interest in realty;
  - (xii) an honorarium or compensation for services;
  - (xiii) a promise or offer of employment;
  - (xiv) any other item that is of pecuniary or compensatory worth to a person.
- (b) "Anything of value" or "thing of value" does not mean:
- (i) printed informational or promotional material, not to exceed ten dollars in monetary value;
  - (ii) items of nominal value, not to exceed ten dollars, containing or displaying promotional material;
  - (iii) a personalized plaque or trophy with a value that does not exceed one hundred fifty dollars;
  - (iv) educational material of a nominal value directly related to the public official's, public member's, or public employee's official responsibilities;
  - (v) an honorary degree bestowed upon a public official, public member, or public employee by a public or private university or college;
  - (vi) promotional or marketing items offered to the general public on the same terms and conditions without regard to status as a public official or public employee; or
  - (vii) a campaign contribution properly received and reported under the provisions of this chapter.
- (2) "Appropriate supervisory office" means:
- (a) the State Ethics Commission for all persons required to file reports under this chapter except for those members of or candidates for the office of State Senator or State Representative;
  - (b) the Senate Ethics Committee for members or staff, including staff elected to serve as officers of or candidates for the office of State Senator; and
  - (c) the House of Representatives Ethics Committee for members or staff, including staff elected to serve as officers of or candidates for the office of State Representative.
- (3) "Business" means a corporation, partnership, proprietorship, firm, an enterprise, a franchise, an association, organization, or a self-employed individual.
- (4) "Business with which he is associated" means a business of which the person or a member of his immediate family is a director, an officer, owner, employee, a compensated agent, or holder of stock worth one hundred thousand dollars or more at fair market value and which constitutes five percent or more of the total outstanding stock of any class.

(5) "Candidate" means a person who seeks appointment, nomination for election, or election to a state or local office, or authorizes or knowingly permits the collection or disbursement of money for the promotion of his candidacy or election. It also means a person on whose behalf write-in votes are solicited if the person has knowledge of such solicitation. "Candidate" does not include a person within the meaning of Section 431(b) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1976.

(6) "Compensation" means money, anything of value, an in-kind contribution or expenditure, or economic benefit conferred on or received by a person.

(7) "Confidential information" means information, whether transmitted orally or in writing, which is obtained by reason of the public position or office held and is of such nature that it is not, at the time of transmission, a matter of public record or public knowledge.

(8) "Consultant" means a person, other than a public official, public member, or public employee who contracts with the State, county, municipality, or a political subdivision thereof to:

(a) evaluate bids for public contracts, or

(b) award public contracts.

(9) "Contribution" means a gift, subscription, loan, guarantee upon which collection is made, forgiveness of a loan, an advance, in-kind contribution or expenditure, a deposit of money or anything of value made to a candidate or committee, as defined in Section 8-13-1300(6), for the purpose of influencing an election; or payment or compensation for the personal service of another person which is rendered for any purpose to a candidate or committee without charge. "Contribution" does not include volunteer personal services on behalf of a candidate or committee for which the volunteer receives no compensation from any source.

(10) "Corporation" means an entity organized in the corporate form under federal law or the laws of any state.

(11)(a) "Economic interest" means an interest distinct from that of the general public in a purchase, sale, lease, contract, option, or other transaction or arrangement involving property or services in which a public official, public member, or public employee may gain an economic benefit of fifty dollars or more.

(b) This definition does not prohibit a public official, public member, or public employee from participating in, voting on, or influencing or attempting to influence an official decision if the only economic interest or reasonably foreseeable benefit that may accrue to the public official, public member, or public employee is incidental to the public official's, public member's, or public employee's position or which accrues to the public official, public member, or public employee as a member of a profession, occupation, or large class to no greater extent than the economic interest or potential benefit could reasonably be foreseen to accrue to all other members of the profession, occupation, or large class.

(12) "Election" means:

(a) a general, special, primary, or runoff election;

(b) a convention or caucus of a political party held to nominate a candidate; or

(c) the election of delegates to a constitutional convention for proposing amendments to the Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of this State.

(13) "Elective office" means an office at the state, county, municipal, or political subdivision level. For the purposes of Articles 1 through 11, the term "elective office" does not include an office under the unified judicial system except that for purposes of campaign practices, campaign disclosure, and disclosure of economic interests, "elective office" includes the office of probate judge.

(14) "Expenditure" means a purchase, payment, loan, forgiveness of a loan, an advance, in-kind contribution or expenditure, a deposit, transfer of funds, a gift of money, or anything of value for any purpose.

(15) "Family member" means an individual who is:

(a) the spouse, parent, brother, sister, child, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild;

(b) a member of the individual's immediate family.

(16) "Gift" means anything of value, including entertainment, food, beverage, travel, and lodging given or paid to a public official, public member, or public employee to the extent that consideration of equal or greater value is not received. A gift includes a rebate or discount on the price of anything of value unless it

is made in the ordinary course of business without regard to that person's status. A gift does not include campaign contributions accepted pursuant to this chapter.

(17) "Governmental entity" means the State, a county, municipality, or political subdivision thereof with which a public official, public member, or public employee is associated or employed. "Governmental entity" also means any charitable organization or foundation, but not an athletic organization or athletic foundation which is associated with a state educational institution and which is organized to raise funds for the academic, educational, research, or building programs of a college or university.

(18) "Immediate family" means:

- (a) a child residing in a candidate's, public official's, public member's, or public employee's household;
- (b) a spouse of a candidate, public official, public member, or public employee; or
- (c) an individual claimed by the candidate, public official, public member, or public employee or the candidate's, public official's, public member's, or public employee's spouse as a dependent for income tax purposes.

(19) "Income" means the receipt or promise of any consideration, whether or not legally enforceable.

(20) "Individual" means one human being.

(21) "Individual with whom he is associated" means an individual with whom the person or a member of his immediate family mutually has an interest in any business of which the person or a member of his immediate family is a director, officer, owner, employee, compensated agent, or holder of stock worth one hundred thousand dollars or more at fair market value and which constitutes five percent or more of the total outstanding stock of any class.

(22) "Loan" means a transfer of money, property, guarantee, or anything of value in exchange for an obligation, conditional or not, to repay in whole or in part.

(23) "Official responsibility" means the direct administrative or operating authority, whether intermediate or final and whether exercisable personally or through subordinates, to approve, disapprove, or otherwise direct government action.

(24) "Person" means an individual, a proprietorship, firm, partnership, joint venture, joint stock company, syndicate, business trust, an estate, a company, committee, an association, a corporation, club, labor organization, or any other organization or group of persons acting in concert.

(25) "Public employee" means a person employed by the State, a county, a municipality, or a political subdivision thereof.

(26) "Public member" means an individual appointed to a noncompensated part-time position on a board, commission, or council. A public member does not lose this status by receiving reimbursement of expenses or a per diem payment for services.

(27) "Public official" means an elected or appointed official of the State, a county, a municipality, or a political subdivision thereof, including candidates for the office. "Public official" does not mean a member of the judiciary except that for the purposes of campaign practices, campaign disclosure, and disclosure of economic interests, a probate judge is considered a public official and must meet the requirements of this chapter.

(28) "Represent" or "representation" means making an appearance, whether gratuitous or for compensation, before a state agency, office, department, division, bureau, board, commission, or council, including the General Assembly, or before a local or regional government office, department, division, bureau, board, or commission.

(29) "Substantial monetary value" means a monetary value of five hundred dollars or more.

(30) "Official capacity" means activities which:

- (a) arise because of the position held by the public official, public member, or public employee;
- (b) involve matters which fall within the official responsibility of the agency, the public official, the public member, or the public employee; and
- (c) are services the agency would normally provide and for which the public official, public member, or public employee would be subject to expense reimbursement by the agency with which the public official, public member, or public employee is associated.

(31) "State board, commission, or council" means an agency created by legislation which has statewide jurisdiction and which exercises some of the sovereign power of the State.

HISTORY: 1991 Act No. 248, Section 3, eff January 1, 1992 and governs only transactions which take place after December 31, 1991; 1995 Act No. 6, Sections 14-17, effective upon approval (became law without the Governor's signature January 12, 1995) and applies only to transactions occurring on or after January 1, 1995; 2003 Act No. 76, Section 11, eff June 26, 2003; 2008 Act No. 245, Section 1, eff May 29, 2008; 2011 Act No. 40, Section 4, eff June 7, 2011.

Editor's Note

1991 Act No. 248, Section 1, provides that this act may be cited as the "Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act of 1991." It is codified predominately as Title 2, Chapter 17, and Title 8, Chapter 13. For a complete list of sections affected by 1991 Act No. 248, consult the Statutory Tables Volume, Part II, Table B, Allocation and Disposition of Acts.