

Restricting Gifts and Campaign Contributions from Lobbyists*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Approved Digest
On: Friday, July 29, 2016
Members: Packard, Anderson, Fasick, Fraps, Jorgensen

Deadline to Request Reconsideration: 12 p.m. on Monday, August 1

The Way It Is Now: The City's Lobbyist Ordinance requires local lobbyists to register with the City's Ethics Commission. When they register, the City does not require them to identify the City agencies they plan to lobby. Each lobbyist must file monthly reports and disclose the campaign contributions made or delivered by the lobbyist, the lobbyist's employer or the lobbyist's clients.

In general, a person is not allowed to make a campaign contribution of more than \$500 to a City elected official or a candidate for City elective office. Lobbyists are subject to this \$500 campaign contribution limit. The City does not restrict anyone, including lobbyists, from collecting campaign contributions from other persons – a practice known as “bundling” – and delivering those contributions to a City official or candidate for City office.

With some exceptions, lobbyists cannot provide any City official with gifts worth more than \$25. Under current law, lobbyists cannot deliver payments or gifts through third parties in order to avoid this gift limit.

The Proposal: Proposition ___ would require lobbyists, when they register with the Ethics Commission, to identify the City agencies they plan to lobby. If lobbyists later wish to lobby different agencies, they would have to inform the Ethics Commission.

Proposition ___ would prohibit a lobbyist from making campaign contributions to a City elected official or bundling contributions for the official, if the lobbyist was registered to lobby the official's agency within the previous 90 days. These restrictions also apply to local candidates.

Proposition ___ also would prohibit a lobbyist from providing gifts of any value to any City officials, although some nonprofits would have a limited exemption. The measure would also clarify that lobbyists cannot use third parties to attempt to avoid these gift limits.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote “yes,” you want to:

- require lobbyists to identify the City agencies they plan to lobby and inform the Ethics Commission of any changes;
- prohibit any lobbyist from making campaign contributions to a City elected official or bundling contributions for the official, if the lobbyist was registered to lobby the official's agency within the previous 90 days; and
- generally prohibit lobbyists from providing gifts of any value to City officials.

A "NO" Vote Means: If you vote “no,” you do not want to make these changes.

**Working title, for identification only. The Director of Elections determines the title of each local ballot measure; measure titles are not considered during Ballot Simplification Committee meetings.*