

Expanding the Definition of Lobbying to Include the Executive and Judicial Branches; SB 394

SB 394 expands the definition of “lobbying” to include lobbying of the executive and judicial branches and makes related changes.

The bill amends law to:

- Expand the definition of lobbying to include lobbying of the executive and judicial branches;
- Equalize the treatment of meals provided by lobbyists between the legislative and executive branches;
- Change lobbyist reporting and registration requirements in accordance with the above; and
- Require a lobbyist to report the date on which a gift, entertainment, or hospitality was provided.

Definition of Lobbying

The bill adds any independent contractor compensated by an executive agency for the purpose of evaluation, management, consulting, or acting as a liaison for the executive agency and who engages in lobbying to the definition of “lobbyist.” Attorneys and law firms representing the agency in any legal matter are not included in the definition.

The bill includes promoting or opposing any action or inaction of any executive agency on any executive administrative matter or judicial agency on any judicial administrative matter to the definition of lobbying.

Exemptions from Lobbying Definition

The following are exempted from the definition of lobbying:

- Written communications from an employee of a private business attempting to sell, or preparing a bid or proposal related to a contract, agreement, or lease;
- Communications by an attorney regarding an executive administrative matter or judicial administrative matter, communication between parties in litigation, witness testimony in an administrative hearing, and investigation communications;
- Communications between and among members of the Legislature or executive or judicial officials or employees;

- Providing written information at the written request of an executive agency, or from a judicial agency regarding a procurement;
- Communications regarding a contract, lease, or agreement of \$5,000 or less;
- Communications made by or on behalf of a private business for the purpose of securing a grant, loan, or tax benefit under a Kansas economic development program; and
- Communications made by officers or employees of a certified business or disabled veteran business, as defined in a statute governing competitive bids.

Additional Definitions

The bill also defines the following terms:

- “Executive administrative matter” means any rule and regulation; utility ratemaking decision; any agreement, contract, bid, or bid process; or any procurement decision, including, but not limited to, any financial services agreement, software licensing, servicing or procurement agreement, any lease, grant, award, loan, bond issue, certificate, license, permit, administrative order, or any other matter that is within the official jurisdiction or cognizance of the executive agency;
- “Judicial administrative matter” means any administrative matter regarding an agreement, contract, bid, or bid process; any procurement decision, including, but not limited to, any financial services agreement, software licensing, servicing or procurement agreement, or lease; or any other administrative procurement or contractual matter;
- “Executive agency” means any state agency, state office or state officer, state officer elect, or employee of the executive branch including, but not limited to, the Board of Regents and State Board of Education but excluding local boards of education of school districts or municipalities or other political subdivisions;
- “Judicial agency” means any department, institution, office, officer, employee, commission, board or bureau, or any agency, division, or unit thereof, of the judicial branch of government including any justice or commissioner of the Supreme Court or judge or judge elect of the judicial branch, or any member of a board, council, or commission who is appointed by the Supreme Court or who is elected and is performing a function or duty of the judicial branch that constitutes a judicial administrative matter; and
- “Written communications or written information” includes e-mail or other electronic forms of communication that are retained as a record by the executive agency or judicial agency.

Gifts and Meals

The bill includes a member, member elect, or employee of the judicial branch among those who shall not be given or paid hospitality in the form of recreation having an aggregate value of \$40 or more, or in the form of food and beverages given to influence the performance of official duties pertaining to a judicial administrative member.

The bill extends to members, members elect, and employees of the judicial branch a provision that hospitality in the form of food and beverages is presumed not to be given to influence an official matter; in continuing law, state officers and employees, candidates for state office, and state officers are included.

The bill increases the value of a meal that may be accepted by any member of the executive branch from \$25 to \$40 per occurrence. A lobbyist may provide a meal, except when a particular official action must be taken as a condition of accepting the meal.

Receipt of a meal by a member of the executive branch from a lobbyist who is not registered or fails to report providing the meal is not considered a violation, unless the recipient knew the lobbyist was not registered or requested the lobbyist not report the meal.

Lobbyist Reporting and Registration Requirements

The bill requires a lobbyist registration to show the name of each executive and judicial agency, office, and any agency, division, unit, department, institution, office, commission, board, bureau, or other division. Lobbyists are also required to note whether they will lobby the legislative branch on the form as well.

A lobbyist must disclose the aggregate value of gift, entertainment, or hospitality provided when the lobbyist expends \$100 or more for lobbying in any reporting period. Lobbyists are also required to disclose the full name of the legislator, member of the judicial branch, or legislative or judicial employee who received the gift, entertainment, or hospitality, and the amount expended. The bill extends these requirements to include state officers, state officers elect, state employees, members elect of the judicial branch, and legislators elect, and requires the lobbyist also report the date the gift, entertainment, or hospitality was provided.

The bill requires a lobbyist to report expenditures for any economic opportunity, gift, loan, gratuity, special discount, favor, hospitality, or service to any officer or candidate for office or employee of the judicial branch, as well as to the legislative branch as in continuing law.