
2003 Wis Eth Bd 06
LOBBYING LAW; SOLICITATION

The Ethics Board advises:

An employee of the Legislature should not solicit lobbyists or lobbying organizations for contributions to a community organization on whose board the employee sits. Nor should the employee use the status or prestige of office to solicit contributions to the organization.

Question

¶1 You are an employee of the legislature, subject to both Wisconsin's Ethics Code and lobbying law. You are on the Board of Directors, and President, of a community organization. You have asked a series of questions about restrictions that may apply to your soliciting contributions to the organization.

Advice

¶2 Prior opinions of the Ethics Board, as well as the Guideline 231 issued by the Board, have addressed the questions you have asked. In accord with these interpretations, the answers to your questions are as follows:

1. You may sign letters to members of the public soliciting donations to the organization as long as you do not refer to your state position and do not use state resources in doing so.
2. You should not sign a letter that is sent to a lobbyist or a lobbying principal. You may rely on the Ethics Board's website for an up-to-date listing of both lobbyists and principals.
3. Except as noted in 4., you may engage in direct contacts with potential donors as long as you do not refer to your state position and do not use state resources in doing so.
4. You may not contact a lobbyist or lobbying principal to solicit a donation.

WR1143