



TO: The Honorable Louis Luchini
The Honorable John Schneck, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: January 8, 2020

RE: LD 1867, An Act To Clarify Lobbyist Reporting Requirements and Simplify Registration Requirements for State Employees Who Lobby on Behalf of a State Department or Agency

Good afternoon Senator Luchini and Representative Schneck. My name is Robert Howe. I'm a resident of Brunswick. I am speaking today on behalf of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections in favor of LD 1867, An Act To Clarify Lobbyist Reporting Requirements and Simplify Registration Requirements for State Employees Who Lobby on Behalf of a State Department or Agency.

Most of the changes to law in this bill appear simply to clarify the existing intent of the law or to bring the law into compliance with actual practice. For example, current law would appear to require that a lobbyist and a lobbyist associate and their employer file a joint registration with the ethics commission, whereas in practice the registration in recent years has been done by the lobbyist and the employer is simply identified on the lobbyist's registration.

Another example of making the law consistent with practice is the requirement for lobbyist associates to attend harassment training. As far as we know, those of us in 'the lobby' do not make a distinction between lobbyists and lobbyist associates with regard to attending such training.

We support the changes to the law on registration of agency personnel who lobby. The bill would simplify matters for agencies by asking them to identify their designated lobbyist-employees in a single letter rather than on a registration form for each such employee. The reduction in the threshold for identifying agency lobbyists for 20 hours to 10 hours seems like a good thing in that it increases transparency and public information.

The bill increases transparency with regard to the expenditure of funds on behalf of a state official or family member when those expenditures are not paid for by the lobbyist's employer. In such case, the bill makes it clear that a separate report to the commission is required.

Finally, the bill also increases transparency by requiring lobbyists to report when they commenced lobbying as well as when they exceed 8 hours of lobbying in a month. This would prevent a lobbyist from failing to report lobbying at all if they did not exceed 8 hours in any month, even if they were actively lobbying for several months below that threshold.

We urge your support for the bill.