



# NEWS RELEASE

*N.J. Election Law Enforcement Commission*

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The Election Law Enforcement Commission has filed Complaints against four lobbyists and one legislative agent who filed 1982 annual reports more than three days late. The reports for 1982 financial activity were to be filed with the Commission on February 15, 1983. The Commission filed Complaints against the following individuals and organizations:

- Prudential Property & Casualty Insurance Company
- New Jersey Association of School Administrators
- National Federation of Independent Business
- New Jersey Environmental Lobby
- James S. Lanard

A total of 274 annual reports were filed for 1982. Of those, 45 reports were filed one to three days late. The Commission elected not to commence formal Complaint proceedings with respect to those delinquent reports. Rather, the Commission will issue warning letters to advise the delinquent filers of their failure to comply with the deadline.

Additionally, there were eight cases where lobbyist organizations which had elected to file short form reports, designating a legislative agent as its filing representative, submitted the required declaration more than three days after the deadline. In those instances, the Commission

decided to forego formal enforcement procedures based, in part, on the fact that the designated legislative agent had timely reported information pertaining to the delinquent lobbyist.

The commencement of the five Complaints is the first formal enforcement action taken by the Commission with respect to the lobbyist disclosure program which is now in its second year of operation. Scott A. Weiner, the Commission's Executive Director, stated that "during the program's first year of operation, the Commission concentrated upon efforts to notify potential filers of the program's reporting obligations. In addition, the Commission evaluated the program in anticipation of legislative and regulatory modifications. Now that the program was entering its second year, the Commission determined that it was appropriate to proceed with more stringent enforcement."

It is possible that additional Complaints for delinquent filing may be initiated. The Commission is currently investigating other instances of apparent late filing in order to determine if the individuals or organizations who filed after the deadline in fact had a reporting obligation.

Weiner stated that the Commission has begun the process of reviewing the content of each filed report in order to determine whether the reporting lobbyist or legislative agent has complied with the law's disclosure requirements. Weiner stated that the Commission is prepared to commence enforcement proceedings in appropriate cases of non compliance.

"The Commission is encouraged by the fact that 98 percent of all filed reports were received within three days of the filing deadline. Moreover, 88 percent of the reports were received on time. The statistics indicate an effort by the regulated industry to comply with the reporting deadline and the success of ongoing Commission programs to notify potential filers of the law's requirements. It is hoped that next year at least 98 percent of the reports will be filed on time."

The Commission's compliance and enforcement activities have been restricted during the past two years due to budget constraints. Weiner observed that "it is well known that the Commission has not been able to obtain funding to hire personnel for compliance positions intended to support the lobbyist disclosure program. Consequently, the Commission has had to utilize personnel and resources intended to support election related activity. Also, the Commission has not obtained funding to provide for the computerization of lobbyist records. In addition to making public review of the records more difficult, the lack of data processing capability has compliance review be conducted manually."

Weiner indicated that the Commission is optimistic that additional funding will be provided to the Commission to support to support this program during the current budget process.

The Commission will begin considering possible revisions to the reporting format for implementation with the 1983 annual report. "Experience is shown that with appropriate adjustments to the reporting form, the public will be able to obtain more

precise and meaningful information while the process of completing the form will be simplified for those individuals and organization responsible for filing reports.

A list of all delinquent filers and copies of the Complaints are available at the Commission's office.

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