



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
August 5, 2010

Members of the public, the media and others can now go online and conveniently view annual financial activity reports filed by lobbyists in 2010, Jeff Brindle, executive director of the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC), announced today.

“ELEC’s primary mission is disclosure. This is another significant step toward actively fulfilling that mission,” Brindle said.

Lobbyists who exceed \$2,500 in receipts or expenditures in a calendar year must disclose their financial activities on an annual basis through reports due on or about February 15. Accordingly, reports filed on February 15, 2010 reflect activity covering calendar year 2009.

In 2009, total lobbyist spending reached \$57.6 million - a 3.4 percent increase. The average number of lobbyists last year was 1,001.

These reports are now available at ELEC’s website: www.elec.state.nj.us. These include detailed information about Governmental Affairs Agents or Represented Entities that hire them.

Brindle said ELEC has been providing a summary of information contained in annual lobbying reports for several years. Copies of reports also have been available for inspection or purchase at ELEC. But until now, they were not accessible online.

“This is the first time the agency has posted actual scanned copies of the reports on its website,” Brindle said. “It is part of an ongoing effort by the agency to make available in electronic form all documents that can be shared with the public.”

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Brindle said he hopes that future computer software upgrades will enable the agency to accept lobbying forms electronically. This would make it easier and faster to provide website disclosure.

Among the 531 annual reports now available online, 171 were filed by lobbyists, which are named “Governmental Affairs Agents” under ELEC law.

Those reports contain the following information for calendar year 2009:

- Contact information for the lobbying firm.
- Name, address and phone number of all Governmental Affairs Agents.
- A list of Represented Entities and fees paid by them to the lobbying firm.
- A list of Governmental Affairs Agents who served on any independent bi-state, state, county or local authority, board or commission.
- Salaries and compensation paid to Governmental Affairs Agents.
- Funds paid to support personnel.
- Communications expenses.
- Travel/lodging expenses.
- Benefits given to public officials, such as meals, travel and gifts.

Reports filed by Represented Entities, which include trade associations, unions, corporations and other groups, may include all the above information while also including assessments, fees or dues collected from members with the specific purpose of influencing state policy. There were 354 such reports filed in 2010.

Annual reports also are filed by those who communicate with the public directly about issues. This is generally known as grassroots lobbying. Six such reports were filed in 2010. Along with identifying information, these reports include funds raised through contributions, assessments, fees or dues, along with funds spent on support personnel, communications, and travel and lodging.

Finally, the website also contains 812 reports filed by Represented Entities authorizing Governmental Affairs Agents to file their annual reports for 2010.

A “lobbyist” is a person who is compensated to communicate with, or provide a benefit to, a state official covered by the lobbying law to influence legislation, regulations or governmental processes. Governmental processes include contracts, permits, rate making etc.

There is a 20-hour per calendar year threshold to trigger registration.

Registered lobbyists are required to report their lobbying activities on a quarterly basis. These reports can be viewed or obtained by visiting or contacting the Commission.

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