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Senate Bill 251 – Maryland Public Ethics Law - Training and Financial Disclosure Requirements - Revisions

Testimony Before the Environment and Transportation Committee

The State Ethics Commission provides this testimony in support of Senate Bill 251. This proposed departmental legislation is a cross-file of HB 230, which this Committee and the House passed unanimously with amendments. SB 251 passed the Senate unanimously as well and contains the same amendments as HB 230. The State Ethics Commission thanks the Committee for its consideration of this departmental legislation and seeks a favorable report.

This proposed departmental legislation removes the two-hour mandatory minimum time requirement for Ethics Training and allows for online or live training for officials, employees, and lobbyists conducted by the State Ethics Commission staff. The State Ethics Commission is responsible for providing ethics training to State elected officials of the Executive Branch, State employees who are required to file an annual financial disclosure statement, some additional designated public officials and registered lobbyists. The proposed legislation allows for greater flexibility in both format and duration while preserving the content requirements for all ethics training. The proposed legislation also clarifies that all sources of compensated employment must be disclosed on required financial disclosure statements. The current statutory language of “salaried employment” tends to limit disclosure of potential conflicts. This proposed revision reflects changes in current forms of outside employment held by State employees and officials and promotes transparency. Finally, this legislation corrects a statutory reference in the gift provision.