
DIGEST

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HB 694 Original

2026 Regular Session

Chassion

Abstract: Lowers fees assessed by the Board of Ethics and associated criminal penalties for late or inaccurate ethics, campaign finance disclosure, and lobbying disclosure filings.

Present law (R.S. 42:1132) requires the Board of Ethics to administer and enforce the provisions of the Code of Governmental Ethics; the legislative, executive branch, and local governmental lobbying registration and disclosure requirements; and, when functioning as the Supervisory Committee on Campaign Finance Disclosure, the provisions of the Campaign Finance Disclosure Act.

Campaign finance disclosure penalties

Present law (R.S. 18:1505.4) provides that any candidate, the treasurer or chairman of a committee, or any other person required to file any campaign finance disclosure reports, who knowingly fails to file or who knowingly fails to timely file any such reports may be assessed a civil penalty for each day until such report is filed.

For reports filed by a candidate for major office or the principal campaign committee or subsidiary committee of such a candidate, present law imposes a penalty of \$100 a day, not to exceed \$2,500. Proposed law lowers the penalty to \$50 a day, not to exceed \$1,250.

For reports filed by a candidate for district office or the principal campaign committee or subsidiary committee of such a candidate, present law imposes a penalty of \$60 a day, not to exceed \$1,000. Proposed law lowers the penalty to \$30 a day, not to exceed \$500.

For reports filed by a candidate for any other office or the principal campaign committee or subsidiary committee of such a candidate, present law imposes a penalty of \$40 a day, not to exceed \$500. Proposed law lowers the penalty to \$20 a day, not to exceed \$250.

For reports filed by any person or any political committee or independent expenditure-only committee, not supporting or opposing a candidate, but only supporting or opposing any proposition or question submitted to the voters or any the recall of a public officer, present law imposes a penalty of \$40 a day, not to exceed \$1,000. Proposed law lowers the penalty to \$20 a day, not to exceed \$500.

For reports filed by any political committee or independent expenditure-only committee supporting or opposing a candidate, other than a candidate's principal or subsidiary campaign committee, present law imposes a penalty of \$200 a day, not to exceed \$3,000. Proposed law lowers the penalty to \$100

a day, not to exceed \$1,500.

Present law provides that for reports which are required to be filed between the time a candidate qualifies and election day, the supervisory committee may impose on any person required to file such a report who has not filed such report by the sixth day after the report is due, after an adjudicatory hearing, an additional civil penalty not to exceed \$10,000. Proposed law lowers the additional penalty to \$5,000.

Present law provides that for any other reports which are required to be filed, the supervisory committee may impose on any person required to file such a report who has not filed such report by the 11th day after the report is due, after an adjudicatory hearing, an additional civil penalty not to exceed \$10,000. Proposed law lowers the additional penalty to \$5,000.

Ethics disclosure penalties

Present law (R.S. 42:1114) requires public servants, legislators, elected officials, and their immediate family members to disclose certain transactions with their agency, the state, or a political subdivision of the state, under certain circumstances. Present law provides that a person who fails to file the required disclosure or knowingly and willfully fails to timely file any such statement, or knowingly and willfully fails to disclose or to accurately disclose any required information shall be assessed a civil penalty of \$250 per day. Proposed law lowers the penalty to \$100 per day.

Present law (R.S. 42:1114.2) provides that each person who has or is seeking to obtain contractual or other business or financial relationships with a state or statewide public retirement system shall file with the board a report of all expenditures for a retirement official or retirement officials.

Present law provides that whoever fails to file such a report or knowingly and willfully fails to timely file any such report, or knowingly and willfully fails to disclose or to accurately disclose any required information shall be fined \$100 per day. Proposed law lowers the penalty to \$50 per day.

Present law (R.S. 42:1114.3) requires disclosure of certain contracts related to disasters or emergencies. Present law provides that whoever fails to file such a statement or knowingly and willfully fails to timely file any such statement, or knowingly and willfully fails to disclose or to accurately disclose any required information shall be fined \$100 per day. Proposed law lowers the penalty to \$50 per day.

Present law provides for personal financial disclosures required of statewide elected officials, department secretaries, and other certain public servants (Tier 1). Present law provides for penalties for failure to file, timely file, or accurately file such disclosures to be assessed at \$500 per day. Proposed law lowers the penalty to \$250 per day.

Present law provides for personal financial disclosures of certain public servants including legislators, members of the Board of Ethics, State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Board of Pardons, among others (Tier 2). Present law provides for penalties for failure to file, timely file, or accurately file such disclosures to be assessed at \$100 per day. Proposed law

lowers the penalty to \$50 per day.

Present law provides for personal financial disclosures of persons appointed to a state board or commission (Tier 2.1) who made a contribution or loan to a campaign of the official who appointed him. Present law provides for penalties for failure to file, timely file, or accurately file such disclosures to be assessed at \$50 per day. Proposed law lowers the penalty to \$25 per day.

Present law provides for personal financial disclosures of elected officials of voting districts with a population under 5,000, among others (Tier 3). Present law provides for penalties for failure to file, timely file, or accurately file such disclosures to be assessed at \$25 per day. Proposed law lowers the penalty to \$10 per day.

Present law provides that a person has willfully and knowingly failed to file a personal financial disclosure statement, willfully and knowingly failed to timely file a statement, willfully and knowingly omitted information from a statement, or willfully and knowingly provided inaccurate information in a statement shall subject the person to prosecution for a misdemeanor. Present law provides that upon first conviction, the person shall be fined not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$5,000; upon a second or subsequent conviction, the person shall be fined not less than \$1,000 dollars nor more than \$10,000 dollars. Proposed law lowers the fine for the first conviction to not less than \$500 nor more than \$2,500; lowers the fine for a second or subsequent conviction to not less than \$500 nor more than \$5,000.

Present law (R.S. 42:1124.1) provides that whoever fails to file a financial statement required by the Ethics Code or whoever knowingly and willfully fails to timely file any such statement, or knowingly and willfully fails to disclose or to accurately disclose any information required by the Ethics Code shall be assessed a civil penalty for each day until such statement or the required accurate information is filed.

Present law provides the maximum filing fee is as follows, unless otherwise provided:

- (1) If the fee is \$25 per day, the maximum shall be \$500. Proposed law instead provides that if the fee is \$10 per day, the maximum shall be \$250.
- (2) If the fee is \$40 per day, the maximum shall be \$1,000. Proposed law instead provides that if the fee is \$20 per day, the maximum shall be \$500.
- (3) If the fee is \$50 per day, the maximum shall be \$1,500. Proposed law instead provides that if the fee is \$25 per day, the maximum shall be \$750.
- (4) If the fee is \$60 per day, the maximum shall be \$2,000. Proposed law instead provides that if the fee is \$30 per day, the maximum shall be \$1,000.
- (5) If the fee is \$100 per day, the maximum shall be \$2,500. Proposed law instead provides that if the fee is \$50 per day, the maximum shall be \$1,250.

- (6) If the fee is \$200 per day, the maximum shall be \$3,000. Proposed law instead provides that if the fee is \$100 per day, the maximum shall be \$1,500.
- (7) If the fee is \$500 per day, the maximum shall be \$12,500. Proposed law instead provides that if the fee is \$250 per day, the maximum shall be \$6,250.

Present law provides that whoever files a false report, other than a personal financial disclosure, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be fined not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$10,000 dollars or imprisoned in parish prison for not more than six months, or both. Proposed law lowers the criminal fine to no less than \$500 nor more than \$5,000.

Lobbyist registration and disclosure penalties

Present law (R.S. 25:50, et seq.) requires legislative lobbyists to register and to file expenditure reports with the board. Present law (R.S. 49:71, et seq.) further requires executive branch lobbyists to register and to file expenditure reports with the board. Present law (R.S. 33:9661 et seq.) further requires local government lobbyists to register and file expenditure reports with the board.

In regulating legislative, executive branch, and local government lobbyists, present law provides that any person required to register and who fails to timely register and any person who fails to timely file any report or fails to timely file a complete expenditure report shall be assessed a late fee of \$50 dollars per day. Proposed law lowers the late fee to \$25 per day.

Present law provides that any person whose registration or report is filed 11 or more days after the day on which it was due may be assessed, in addition to any late fees, after a hearing by the board, a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000. Proposed law lowers the additional penalty to \$500.

Present law (R.S. 42:1157) provides that the maximum amount of late fees for all lobbyist registrations and disclosures is \$500. Proposed law lowers the maximum fee to \$250.

(Amends R.S. 18:1505.4(A)(2)(a) and (4), R.S. 24:58(D)(1) and (2), R.S. 33:9668(D)(1) and (2), R.S. 42:1114.2(G)(2), 1114.3(C)(4)(b), 1124.1(A)(2) and (B), 1124.4(C)(1)-(4) and (D)(1)(b), 1153, and 1157(A)(2) and (4), and R.S. 49:78(D)(1) and (2))