

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

BILL: CS/SB 544

INTRODUCER: Committee on Ethics and Elections and Senator Braynon

SUBJECT: Legislative Lobbying Requirements

DATE: April 1, 2013 **REVISED:** _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Carlton	Roberts	EE	Fav/CS
2.	McVaney	McVaney	GO	Pre-meeting
3.			RC	
4.				
5.				
6.				

Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:

A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE..... Statement of Substantial Changes

B. AMENDMENTS..... Technical amendments were recommended

Amendments were recommended

Significant amendments were recommended

I. Summary:

CS/SB 544 clarifies that the use of a public facility or public property provided from a governmental entity to a legislator for a public purpose is not an expenditure for purposes of the “legislative expenditure ban” in s. 11.045, F.S., regardless of whether the governmental entity is a principal. Unlike the current Rules of the Florida Senate Rules and Administrative Policy Manual of the Florida House of Representatives, this statutory exception does not include any requirement for approval by the presiding officers prior to the expenditure being made between the governmental entity and the legislator.

This bill substantially amends s. 11.045, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Section 11.045, F.S., contains provisions requiring legislative lobbying registration and legislative lobbyist compensation reports, and it contains the “legislative expenditure ban.”

Section 11.045(4)(a), F.S., provides in pertinent part, that “no lobbyist or principal shall make, directly or indirectly, and no member or employee of the legislature shall knowingly accept,

directly or indirectly, any expenditure . . .” A “principal” is defined as “the person, firm, corporation, or other entity which has employed or retained a lobbyist.”¹ This appears to include governmental entities such as municipalities, counties, water management districts, universities, and colleges.

For purposes of this statute, the term “expenditure” means:

A payment, distribution, loan, advance, reimbursement, deposit, or anything of value made by a lobbyist or principal for the purpose of lobbying. The term does not include contributions or expenditures reported pursuant to chapter 106 or federal election law, campaign-related personal services provided without compensation by individuals volunteering their time, any other contribution or expenditure made by or to a political party or affiliated party committee, or any other contribution or expenditure made by an organization that is exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. s. 527 or s. 501(c)(4).²

The term “lobbying” means “influencing or attempting to influence legislative action or nonaction through oral or written communication or an attempt to obtain the goodwill of a member or employee of the Legislature.”³

The following penalties can be imposed for violation of the legislative expenditure ban:

- A fine of not more than \$5,000;
- Reprimand;
- Censure;
- Probation; and/or
- Prohibition on lobbying for a period not to exceed 24 months.⁴

Section 11.045(5), F.S., requires each house of the legislature to provide by rule a procedure for determining the applicability and interpretation of this section. To that end, the Florida Senate has adopted Senate Rule 9.8.

The pertinent portion of that Rule for this legislation is contained in Senate Rule 9.8, Part 1, section one, exception 6. The text of the rule reads:

6. Government to Government Expenditures

Real property or a facility owned or operated by a state or local public agency or entity that is a lobbying principal and transportation to, from, and at the location provided by that agency or entity may, with the prior approval of the respective state legislative presiding officer or his or her designee, be used without payment, by a member, committee, or staff of the Legislature for a public legislative

¹ Section 11.045(1)(i), F.S.

² Section 11.045(1)(c), F.S.

³ Section 11.045(1)(e), F.S.

⁴ Section 11.045(7), F.S.

purpose. Such purposes include publicly noticed legislative committee meetings and site visits to operations conducted by the public agency or entity. Allowable free uses also specifically include legislative district offices and sub-offices and the normally attendant utilities, parking, janitorial services, building maintenance, and telecommunications equipment and services common to a government building in which the office is located. Allowable free use does not extend to sports or entertainment venues; does not include food, beverages, or entertainment; and does not include free parking privileges at any location other than a district office or sub-office.

The Florida House of Representatives has included a similar approval process in its policies.⁵

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

CS/SB 544 creates a statutory exception to the definition of “expenditure” for a “government-to-government use.” The Committee Substitute states that a “government-to-government use” is the “use of a public facility or public property that is made available by one governmental entity to a legislator for a public purpose, regardless of whether either is required to register any person as a lobbyist.”

This statutory exception does not include the requirement of approval by the presiding officers currently contained in the both the Senate Rules and Administrative Policy Manual for the House of Representatives.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

⁵Florida House of Representatives, “Administrative Policy Manual” dated November 2012, pages 9 and 10.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Ethics and Elections on March 11, 2013:

The CS differs from the original bill by permitting expenditures by a governmental entity, which are made for a public purpose, to a legislator rather than to another governmental entity.

B. Amendments:

None.