



Ohio Revised Code

Section 102.03 Representation by present or former public official or employee prohibited.

Effective: September 29, 2017

Legislation: House Bill 49 - 132nd General Assembly

(A)(1) No present or former public official or employee shall, during public employment or service or for twelve months thereafter, represent a client or act in a representative capacity for any person on any matter in which the public official or employee personally participated as a public official or employee through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, the rendering of advice, investigation, or other substantial exercise of administrative discretion.

(2) For twenty-four months after the conclusion of service, no former commissioner or attorney examiner of the public utilities commission shall represent a public utility, as defined in section 4905.02 of the Revised Code, or act in a representative capacity on behalf of such a utility before any state board, commission, or agency.

(3) For twenty-four months after the conclusion of employment or service, no former public official or employee who personally participated as a public official or employee through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, the rendering of advice, the development or adoption of solid waste management plans, investigation, inspection, or other substantial exercise of administrative discretion under Chapter 343. or 3734. of the Revised Code shall represent a person who is the owner or operator of a facility, as defined in section 3734.01 of the Revised Code, or who is an applicant for a permit or license for a facility under that chapter, on any matter in which the public official or employee personally participated as a public official or employee.

(4) For a period of one year after the conclusion of employment or service as a member or employee of the general assembly, no former member or employee of the general assembly shall represent, or act in a representative capacity for, any person on any matter before the general assembly, any committee of the general assembly, or the controlling board. Division (A)(4) of this section does not apply to or affect a person who separates from service with the general assembly on or before December 31, 1995. As used in division (A)(4) of this section "person" does not include any state agency or political subdivision of the state.



(5) As used in divisions (A)(1), (2), and (3) of this section, "matter" includes any case, proceeding, application, determination, issue, or question, but does not include the proposal, consideration, or enactment of statutes, rules, ordinances, resolutions, or charter or constitutional amendments. As used in division (A)(4) of this section, "matter" includes the proposal, consideration, or enactment of statutes, resolutions, or constitutional amendments. As used in division (A) of this section, "represent" includes any formal or informal appearance before, or any written or oral communication with, any public agency on behalf of any person.

(6) Nothing contained in division (A) of this section shall prohibit, during such period, a former public official or employee from being retained or employed to represent, assist, or act in a representative capacity for the public agency by which the public official or employee was employed or on which the public official or employee served.

(7) Division (A) of this section shall not be construed to prohibit the performance of ministerial functions, including, but not limited to, the filing or amendment of tax returns, applications for permits and licenses, incorporation papers, and other similar documents.

(8) Division (A) of this section does not prohibit a nonelected public official or employee of a state agency, as defined in section 1.60 of the Revised Code, from becoming a public official or employee of another state agency. Division (A) of this section does not prohibit such an official or employee from representing or acting in a representative capacity for the official's or employee's new state agency on any matter in which the public official or employee personally participated as a public official or employee at the official's or employee's former state agency. However, no public official or employee of a state agency shall, during public employment or for twelve months thereafter, represent or act in a representative capacity for the official's or employee's new state agency on any audit or investigation pertaining to the official's or employee's new state agency in which the public official or employee personally participated at the official's or employee's former state agency through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, the rendering of advice, investigation, or other substantial exercise of administrative discretion.

(9) Division (A) of this section does not prohibit a nonelected public official or employee of a political subdivision from becoming a public official or employee of a different department, division,



agency, office, or unit of the same political subdivision. Division (A) of this section does not prohibit such an official or employee from representing or acting in a representative capacity for the official's or employee's new department, division, agency, office, or unit on any matter in which the public official or employee personally participated as a public official or employee at the official's or employee's former department, division, agency, office, or unit of the same political subdivision. As used in this division, "political subdivision" means a county, township, municipal corporation, or any other body corporate and politic that is responsible for government activities in a geographic area smaller than that of the state.

(10) No present or former Ohio casino control commission official shall, during public service or for two years thereafter, represent a client, be employed or compensated by a person regulated by the commission, or act in a representative capacity for any person on any matter before or concerning the commission.

No present or former commission employee shall, during public employment or for two years thereafter, represent a client or act in a representative capacity on any matter in which the employee personally participated as a commission employee through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, the rendering of advice, investigation, or other substantial exercise of administrative discretion.

(B) No present or former public official or employee shall disclose or use, without appropriate authorization, any information acquired by the public official or employee in the course of the public official's or employee's official duties that is confidential because of statutory provisions, or that has been clearly designated to the public official or employee as confidential when that confidential designation is warranted because of the status of the proceedings or the circumstances under which the information was received and preserving its confidentiality is necessary to the proper conduct of government business.

(C) No public official or employee shall participate within the scope of duties as a public official or employee, except through ministerial functions as defined in division (A) of this section, in any license or rate-making proceeding that directly affects the license or rates of any person, partnership, trust, business trust, corporation, or association in which the public official or employee or immediate family owns or controls more than five per cent. No public official or employee shall



participate within the scope of duties as a public official or employee, except through ministerial functions as defined in division (A) of this section, in any license or rate-making proceeding that directly affects the license or rates of any person to whom the public official or employee or immediate family, or a partnership, trust, business trust, corporation, or association of which the public official or employee or the public official's or employee's immediate family owns or controls more than five per cent, has sold goods or services totaling more than one thousand dollars during the preceding year, unless the public official or employee has filed a written statement acknowledging that sale with the clerk or secretary of the public agency and the statement is entered in any public record of the agency's proceedings. This division shall not be construed to require the disclosure of clients of attorneys or persons licensed under section 4732.12 of the Revised Code, or patients of persons licensed under section 4731.14 of the Revised Code.

(D) No public official or employee shall use or authorize the use of the authority or influence of office or employment to secure anything of value or the promise or offer of anything of value that is of such a character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence upon the public official or employee with respect to that person's duties.

(E) No public official or employee shall solicit or accept anything of value that is of such a character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence upon the public official or employee with respect to that person's duties.

(F) No person shall promise or give to a public official or employee anything of value that is of such a character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence upon the public official or employee with respect to that person's duties.

(G) In the absence of bribery or another offense under the Revised Code or a purpose to defraud, contributions made to a campaign committee, political party, legislative campaign fund, political action committee, or political contributing entity on behalf of an elected public officer or other public official or employee who seeks elective office shall be considered to accrue ordinarily to the public official or employee for the purposes of divisions (D), (E), and (F) of this section.

As used in this division, "contributions," "campaign committee," "political party," "legislative campaign fund," "political action committee," and "political contributing entity" have the same



meanings as in section 3517.01 of the Revised Code.

(H)(1) No public official or employee, except for the president or other chief administrative officer of or a member of a board of trustees of a state institution of higher education as defined in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code, who is required to file a financial disclosure statement under section 102.02 of the Revised Code shall solicit or accept, and no person shall give to that public official or employee, an honorarium. Except as provided in division (H)(2) of this section, this division and divisions (D), (E), and (F) of this section do not prohibit a public official or employee who is required to file a financial disclosure statement under section 102.02 of the Revised Code from accepting and do not prohibit a person from giving to that public official or employee the payment of actual travel expenses, including any expenses incurred in connection with the travel for lodging, and meals, food, and beverages provided to the public official or employee at a meeting at which the public official or employee participates in a panel, seminar, or speaking engagement or provided to the public official or employee at a meeting or convention of a national organization to which any state agency, including, but not limited to, any state legislative agency or state institution of higher education as defined in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code, pays membership dues. Except as provided in division (H)(2) of this section, this division and divisions (D), (E), and (F) of this section do not prohibit a public official or employee who is not required to file a financial disclosure statement under section 102.02 of the Revised Code from accepting and do not prohibit a person from promising or giving to that public official or employee an honorarium or the payment of travel, meal, and lodging expenses if the honorarium, expenses, or both were paid in recognition of demonstrable business, professional, or esthetic interests of the public official or employee that exist apart from public office or employment, including, but not limited to, such a demonstrable interest in public speaking and were not paid by any person or other entity, or by any representative or association of those persons or entities, that is regulated by, doing business with, or seeking to do business with the department, division, institution, board, commission, authority, bureau, or other instrumentality of the governmental entity with which the public official or employee serves.

(2) No person who is a member of the board of a state retirement system, a state retirement system investment officer, or an employee of a state retirement system whose position involves substantial and material exercise of discretion in the investment of retirement system funds shall solicit or accept, and no person shall give to that board member, officer, or employee, payment of actual travel expenses, including expenses incurred with the travel for lodging, meals, food, and beverages.



(I) A public official or employee may accept travel, meals, and lodging or expenses or reimbursement of expenses for travel, meals, and lodging in connection with conferences, seminars, and similar events related to official duties if the travel, meals, and lodging, expenses, or reimbursement is not of such a character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence upon the public official or employee with respect to that person's duties. The house of representatives and senate, in their code of ethics, and the Ohio ethics commission, under section 111.15 of the Revised Code, may adopt rules setting standards and conditions for the furnishing and acceptance of such travel, meals, and lodging, expenses, or reimbursement.

A person who acts in compliance with this division and any applicable rules adopted under it, or any applicable, similar rules adopted by the supreme court governing judicial officers and employees, does not violate division (D), (E), or (F) of this section. This division does not preclude any person from seeking an advisory opinion from the appropriate ethics commission under section 102.08 of the Revised Code.

(J) For purposes of divisions (D), (E), and (F) of this section, the membership of a public official or employee in an organization shall not be considered, in and of itself, to be of such a character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence on the public official or employee with respect to that person's duties. As used in this division, "organization" means a church or a religious, benevolent, fraternal, or professional organization that is tax exempt under subsection 501(a) and described in subsection 501(c)(3), (4), (8), (10), or (19) of the "Internal Revenue Code of 1986." This division does not apply to a public official or employee who is an employee of an organization, serves as a trustee, director, or officer of an organization, or otherwise holds a fiduciary relationship with an organization. This division does not allow a public official or employee who is a member of an organization to participate, formally or informally, in deliberations, discussions, or voting on a matter or to use the public official's or employee's official position with regard to the interests of the organization on the matter if the public official or employee has assumed a particular responsibility in the organization with respect to the matter or if the matter would affect that person's personal, pecuniary interests.

(K) It is not a violation of this section for a prosecuting attorney to appoint assistants and employees in accordance with division (B) of section 309.06 and section 2921.421 of the Revised Code, for a



chief legal officer of a municipal corporation or an official designated as prosecutor in a municipal corporation to appoint assistants and employees in accordance with sections 733.621 and 2921.421 of the Revised Code, for a township law director appointed under section 504.15 of the Revised Code to appoint assistants and employees in accordance with sections 504.151 and 2921.421 of the Revised Code, or for a coroner to appoint assistants and employees in accordance with division (B) of section 313.05 of the Revised Code.

As used in this division, "chief legal officer" has the same meaning as in section 733.621 of the Revised Code.

(L) No present public official or employee with a casino gaming regulatory function shall indirectly invest, by way of an entity the public official or employee has an ownership interest or control in, or directly invest in a casino operator, management company, holding company, casino facility, or gaming-related vendor. No present public official or employee with a casino gaming regulatory function shall directly or indirectly have a financial interest in, have an ownership interest in, be the creditor or hold a debt instrument issued by, or have an interest in a contractual or service relationship with a casino operator, management company, holding company, casino facility, or gaming-related vendor. This section does not prohibit or limit permitted passive investing by the public official or employee.

As used in this division, "passive investing" means investment by the public official or employee by means of a mutual fund in which the public official or employee has no control of the investments or investment decisions. "Casino operator," "holding company," "management company," "casino facility," and "gaming-related vendor" have the same meanings as in section 3772.01 of the Revised Code.

(M) A member of the Ohio casino control commission, the executive director of the commission, or an employee of the commission shall not:

(1) Accept anything of value, including but not limited to a gift, gratuity, emolument, or employment from a casino operator, management company, or other person subject to the jurisdiction of the commission, or from an officer, attorney, agent, or employee of a casino operator, management company, or other person subject to the jurisdiction of the commission;



(2) Solicit, suggest, request, or recommend, directly or indirectly, to a casino operator, management company, or other person subject to the jurisdiction of the commission, or to an officer, attorney, agent, or employee of a casino operator, management company, or other person subject to the jurisdiction of the commission, the appointment of a person to an office, place, position, or employment;

(3) Participate in casino gaming or any other amusement or activity at a casino facility in this state or at an affiliate gaming facility of a licensed casino operator, wherever located.

In addition to the penalty provided in section 102.99 of the Revised Code, whoever violates division (M)(1), (2), or (3) of this section forfeits the individual's office or employment.