ETHICS REPORTER

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Kentucky Legislative Ethics Commission
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Forms Due by September 15th – File Your Form Today!

The Code of Legislative Ethics requires all lobbyists and employers to file their updated registration statements on the 15th day of January, February, March, April, May, and September of each year. These disclosure statements enable the public, legislators, and media to ascertain the extent of legislative lobbying in the Commonwealth.

The next registration statements from lobbyists and employers for the period of May 1-August 31, 2026 will be due on Tuesday, September 15, 2026, per KRS 6.807(3). The Commission has sent every employer and lobbyist information on how to file online. Please visit the Commission's website to file your reports: https://apps.klec.ky.gov/lec/onlinefiling.aspx. The online portal is open now, we recommend you get ahead of the deadline and file your forms today.

Newly-Registered and Terminated Lobbying Employers

Since the end of the 2026 General Assembly, several businesses have registered to lobby, while others have terminated registration and are no longer lobbying in Kentucky. There are currently 706 legislative agents registered to lobby in Kentucky, and they're working for 965 employers. The following organization recently registered to lobby in Kentucky:

Alibaba Group Holding Limited
Alliance for Consumers Action Fund
Alzheimer's Association
ClearPath Health Collaborative, Inc.
Council on Developmental Disabilities, Inc.
GlaxoSmithKline
Global Kratom Coalition (The)
Infrastructure Development Management, LLC
KY Narcotic Officers Assn.
LS Power Development, LLC
Northern KY Civic Strategies LLC
Nuclear Company (The)
Soda Health dba Evermore

The following organizations recently terminated their status in Kentucky:

Campaign for Fairer Gambling
Cordata Healthcare Innovations, Inc.
Graves Gilbert Clinic
NECCO LLC
Shelter Insurance

Refresher – Employer and Legislative Agent Record Keeping

People often ask "how long should we keep copies of updated registration statements?" The short answer is two years. The Ethics Code specifically says, all legislative agents and employers must retain receipts or maintain records for all expenditures that are required to be reported pursuant to the Code. These receipts or records must be maintained until the thirty-first day of December of the second calendar year after the year in which the expenditure was made. Please email our office if you have a specific question about this requirement.

Ethics & Lobbying News from around the U.S.

Ethics panel clears Braun administration official to join construction firm, lobby lawmakers

By: Casey Smith – **Yahoo! News** – August 13, 2026

The Braun administration's top contract-oversight official can immediately begin lobbying Indiana lawmakers for a construction company after an ethics panel Thursday waived a one-year restriction on such work.

The Indiana State Ethics Commission unanimously approved the waiver for Department of Administration Commissioner Brandon Clifton, who plans to become director of government affairs for Hagerman Group.

Clifton has led the agency since appointed by Gov. Mike Braun in January 2025. It is responsible for reviewing and approving thousands of state contracts each year.

In his new position, Clifton will serve as Hagerman's primary liaison to local governments, the Indiana General Assembly and industry associations. His work will also include business development, according to filings submitted to the commission.

Clifton said Thursday that lobbying will be a significant part of the job.

"That will be a critical component of the job, especially with the Legislature and shaping construction informed policies going through," Clifton said. "I would expect to register as a lobbyist in that capacity, as well."

Indiana ethics law generally bars former state employees from registering as executive-branch lobbyists or lobbying the agency for which they worked for 365 days after leaving government. The commission's action waives that "cooling off" restriction for Clifton, although he remains subject to other post-employment rules.

IDOA General Counsel Jennifer Jansen told commissioners that Clifton rarely reviews or approves contracts himself because those duties generally fall to the agency's legal division.

Clifton said he has personally approved one contract during his tenure — an Indiana Department of Correction agreement handled by him because of a conflict elsewhere in the agency — and it did not involve Hagerman.

Hagerman has no active state contracts, according to the waiver request. The company's only state agreement during Clifton's tenure was a $22,883 Department of Natural Resources contract to install a shooting-range baffle at the Roush Lake Fish and Wildlife Area. The four-month contract expired June 30.

Clifton did not know about, review or sign that agreement, state filings said.

After Clifton entered employment negotiations with Hagerman, IDOA imposed an ethics screening barring him from exercising official duties or participating in decisions involving the company.

The screen, executed July 28, also prohibits him from helping a future employer with matters in which he personally and substantially participated while working for IDOA.

Clifton said Hagerman has historically focused on local government work and is not expected to pursue the state as a significant source of business. His new duties will largely involve local capital projects and construction policy before the General Assembly.

"The primary responsibilities will be working with local units of government on their capital projects, on their vertical construction opportunities," Clifton told commissioners.

The commission separately approved a post-employment waiver for Indiana Department of Transportation Deputy Commissioner Roland Fegan, a 42-year agency employee who plans to become a construction project director for engineering firm Butler, Fairman & Seufert.

Commissioners additionally approved updated rules for limited personal use of Indiana Criminal Justice Institute property, expanding the policy to cover contractors with state-issued equipment

The panel also determined that former Department of Child Services official Justin Litman must remain recused from work involving the Jay County Family Resource Center in his new role with Firefly Children and Family Alliance.

In a separate case, commissioners said technology consultant Anthony Vespa can continue serving on the State Workforce Development Board but must file updated ethics disclosures as new state contracts involving his company arise.

Legislative immunity clause protects Alaska ethics investigations, state Supreme Court says

By: James Brooks - **Yahoo! News** – August 7, 2026

The Alaska Supreme Court on Friday upheld a lower court's decision to dismiss a lawsuit by former state Sen. Lora Reinbold, R-Eagle River, against the state of Alaska and the Alaska Legislature's committee on legislative ethics.

Reinbold had sued the committee and the state's executive branch in 2022 after the committee concluded that Reinbold had violated the Legislative Ethics Act by blocking people from commenting on her legislative Facebook page "solely for expressing opinions in disagreement with her own."

Superior Court Judge Thomas Matthews dismissed Reinbold's case in 2024. She unsuccessfully asked Matthews to reconsider, then appealed to the Supreme Court.

Writing on behalf of the court — which ruled unanimously — Justice Dario Borghesan said, "At no point did the Ethics Committee act outside the statutorily defined investigative process. Therefore, its actions are protected by legislative immunity."

That immunity derives from Article II, Section 6 of the Alaska Constitution, which states that "Legislators may not be held to answer before any other tribunal for any statement made in exercise of their legislative duties while the legislature is in session."

Reinbold argued that immunity should not apply because her due process rights were violated.

"But legislative immunity applies even to claims that a legislative body has violated the right to due process," Borghesan wrote.

Reinbold, reached by text message on Friday morning, said she was unable to immediately talk about the issue because she was at an event with U.S. Speaker of the House Mike Johnson.

Johnson is in Alaska this week as part of a trip to boost the re-election campaign of U.S. Rep. Nick Begich III, R-Alaska.

After the publication of this article, Reinbold said by text message that she is considering an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In Friday's 19-page order, Borghesan states that a plaintiff or defendant could make an argument that immunity conflicts with the Alaska Constitution's guarantee — under Article I, Section 7 — of "fair and just treatment in the course of executive legislative and executive investigations."

In this case, neither plaintiffs nor defendants briefed that argument, Borghesan said. Reinbold briefly raised the argument, he said, but "offer(ed) no legal authority to help us interpret this constitutional provision."

"Because Reinbold's assertion that the Ethics Committee violated her right to fair and just treatment was not adequately briefed, we do not consider it," he said.

The court's order this week also upholds Judge Matthews' decision to deny Reinbold the chance to amend her legal complaint. Reinbold had requested to change it after the deadline to do so.

In addition, the order upholds Matthews' decision to dismiss claims against the executive branch as moot.

Reinbold had objected to a letter from the governor saying that neither he nor other members of the administration would work with her because she repeatedly spread misinformation about the state's response to COVID-19.

"Reinbold is no longer a legislator, so we could not order the executive branch to work with her," Borghesan wrote.

Reinbold had argued that a similar case could arise in the future and that the issue is not moot.

But Borghesan said that if a similar case arises between another legislator and another governor in the future, the court will consider those arguments at that time.

Lobbying ban tackles one gap in Michigan ethics and transparency laws

By: Clara Hendrickson - **Detroit Free Press** - July 28, 2026

A new Michigan law aims to slow the revolving door between holding public office and lobbying, creating a cooling-off period before state lawmakers, the governor and other officials can capitalize on their political experience in the private sector.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed legislation into law July 27 requiring former state legislators, governors, lieutenant governors and executive branch department heads to wait two years before working as lobbyists.

The legislation also prevents current lawmakers from receiving compensation for lobbying activities in Michigan or another state.

The laws will take effect Jan. 1, 2027, at the start of a new legislative session and when Michigan's new governor will take office. (Whitmer cannot run again due to term limits.) Violating the new law would be a misdemeanor punishable up to 90 days' imprisonment and/or a $1,000 fine.

By slowing the transition time between holding office and lobbying, proponents of the waiting period argue it can prevent corruption or end a perception that instead of serving constituents, lawmakers want to position themselves for their next gig.

"By instituting a cooling-off period, we can help ensure decisions are made for the right reasons. This new law is about strengthening public trust and making it clear that public service comes before personal gain," said bill sponsor state Rep. Mark Tisdel, R-Rochester Hills, in a statement.

Various government watchdog groups have given Michigan poor ratings when it comes to its transparency and ethics laws. Michigan's new regulation on lobbying activities by former officials brings it in line with the majority of states with similar waiting periods in place, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Michigan still stands out nationally for exempting the governor and state lawmakers from its Freedom of Information Act, which requires the disclosure of records from public bodies throughout the state, from county commissions to sheriff's offices. Efforts to expand FOIA have routinely stalled in Michigan.