

ETHICS REPORTER

December 2025



Kentucky Legislative Ethics Commission
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Two-year registration for lobbyists and employers opened on December 1

Employers and Legislative Agents:

All current registrations with the Kentucky Legislative Ethics Commission will expire on December 31, 2025. Below is a link to the Initial Registration Statement for a new two-year period beginning January 1, 2026 and ending on December 31, 2027.

We began accepting completed registrations on December 1, 2025.

Initial registration forms CANNOT be filed online. [Click here to get the form.](#)

FEE: A registration fee of \$250 must be paid by the employer of one or more legislative agents. This fee may be paid online via e-check, Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover. If you decide to pay with a paper check, the check should be payable to the **Kentucky State Treasurer** with the employer's name on the memo line and mail it along with your completed forms to 22 Mill Creek Park, Frankfort, Ky. 40601. If you decide to pay by credit card or e-check, please access our new online payment portal located on our website at <https://klec.ky.gov>, then click "Make a Payment", then enter your employer ID (the same ID you use to file expense forms online) and follow the steps to make a payment. Once you have paid by credit card or e-check, the registration form(s) may be faxed, or scanned and e-mailed, along with the completed copy of the paid receipt.

Credit Card Fee – 2.95% per transaction
Electronic Check Fee – \$2 per transaction

NOTE: If you need to register for a little while in 2025 and do not want to pay the \$250 twice, any registrations dated December 1, 2025 or after can be used for the same \$250 registration fee and the employer will not be charged twice. We give December as a free month of registration in this situation only.

REMINDER: Date Engaged Box: If you are currently registered with us and you are renewing your registration, the date engaged box should say "Renewal". We have added this to the form for you. If you have a new registration, it must list a specific date of engagement on the form.

PLEASE REMEMBER: All forms must be completely filled out and the employer must sign the registration form of each legislative agent.

If you have questions, please call our office at (502) 573-2863, or e-mail:
Donnita.Crittenden@kylegislature.gov or Lori.Smith@kylegislature.gov.

[Expense Reports Are Also Due Thursday, January 15, 2026](#)

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. We appreciate the timeliness and diligence shown by the filers. These disclosure statements enable the public, legislators, and media to ascertain the extent of legislative lobbying in the Commonwealth, an important goal at all times.

Registration statements (expense forms) from lobbyists and employers for the period of September 1- December 31, 2025, can be filed online after January 1st and will be due no later than Thursday, January 15, 2026, per KRS 6.807(3). The easiest and quickest way for lobbyists and employers to file expense forms is to visit the Commission's website at: <https://apps.klec.ky.gov/lec/onlinefiling.aspx>. Commission staff have sent every employer and lobbyist information on how to file online, or via email or fax.

[“Save The Date” – Training for Legislators!](#)

The Ethics Code requires every legislator to have 2 hours of current issues training per year. The annual Current Issues Training will be held on January 7, 2026 from 9 – 11 a.m. for all legislators.

Legislators should be sure to put this required training on their schedules, and bring any questions that they have about the Ethics Code.

[Ethics Commission Hires Larisa Plecha as General Counsel](#)

The Ethics Commission has hired Larisa Plecha as the new General Counsel, effective December 16, 2025. After graduating from the Youth Performing Arts School at duPont Manual HS, she went on to obtain her bachelor of music degree from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. Before going to law school, she worked as an orchestra teacher in the Fairfax County Public Schools (VA). She earned her law degree from the Ave Maria School of Law in Naples, FL, and she has served the Commonwealth of Kentucky as a staff attorney at both the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and the Attorney General's Office. Please join us in congratulating Larisa in her new position at the Commission office.

[Newly-Registered and Terminated Lobbying Employers](#)

The following businesses and organizations recently registered to lobby in Kentucky: **Blue Sky Global Public Benefit Corporation, Choose Hope LLC, Kentuckians for the Arts, KY State Pipe Trades Assn., Lexington Children's Theatre, Louisville Chap. National Electrical Contractors Assn., Marzetti Company (The) & Its Subsidiaries, OTN Group, Responsive Gov Action, and Roaring Brooke Recovery.**

The following business recently terminated their status in Kentucky: **Custom Data Processing, KY Coroners Association, KY Unitarian Universalist Justice Action Network, Lamar Advertising Company, National Assn. of Social Workers KY Chapter, and Navitus Health Solutions.**

Ethics & Lobbying News from around the U.S.

Ethics commission to investigate 17 Colorado Democrats accused of accepting contributions for Vail retreat

By: Marianne Goodland – **COLORADO POLITICS** – November 18, 2025

The Colorado Independent Ethics Commission on Tuesday voted to move forward with investigations into 17 state Democratic lawmakers who have been accused of accepting illegal contributions to pay for an October retreat in Vail.

Colorado Common Cause filed complaints against members of the Colorado Opportunity Caucus, a group of moderate Democrats in the General Assembly.

The complaints were made against the following:

- Sen. Lindsey Daugherty of Arvada, the group's chair.
- Rep. Shannon Bird of Westminster, a member of the caucus but who she did not participate in the retreat, nor was she part of the conversation seeking \$25,000 from One Main Street Colorado to pay for hotel rooms at the Sonnenalp Vail resort for the Oct. 3-5 retreat. She said in a statement that she has filed a motion to dismiss the complaint.
- Reps. Tish Mauro of Pueblo, Michael Carter of Aurora, Jacque Phillips of Thornton, Rebekah Stewart of Lakewood, Meghan Lukens of Steamboat Springs, Karen McCormick of Longmont, Cecilia Espenosa and Sean Camacho, both of Denver; Matthew Martinez of Alamosa, Katie Stewart of Durango, William Lindstedt of Broomfield; Senate President pro tem Dafna Michaelson Jenet of Aurora; Sens. Marc Snyder of Colorado Springs, Kyle Mullica of Thornton and Judy Amabile of Boulder.

The Colorado Common Cause complaint said that One Main Street organized a closed-door "summit" for business advocates to "educate" Opportunity Caucus members on issues important to business interests.

Legislators couldn't afford the \$25,000 cost of their rooms at the hotel, the complaint said, "so they asked One Main Street to pay that bill".

"One Main Street paid for legislators' rooms as requested and also appears to have funded other expenses of the legislators' Summit, including staff effort and food and drink," the complaint said. "In short, OMSC wielded undisclosed influence over a large number of Colorado legislators by paying significant costs of the event, including their individual travel expenses."

One Main Street, which only partially discloses its donors, has an independent expenditure committee. From 2022 to 2024, the group's committee raised \$1.1 million, with almost \$800,000 from One Main Street.

Its most significant expenditure, totaling \$505,000, was for A Whole Lot of People for Change, which says it supports “pragmatic candidates of all political parties.” In the 2024 primaries, the IEC spent only on Democratic races, including for Daugherty, Rebekah Stewart, Phillips, Espinoza, Carter, Amabile, and Camacho.

State law prohibits an independent expenditure committee from coordinating with candidates.

The ethics commission will now charge its executive director with investigating the complaints.

Under Article 29 of the state Constitution, lawmakers are not allowed to accept gifts exceeding \$75 per person per year. At issue is the cost of the rooms at the Sonnenalp Vail, which came in at about \$25,000 for the lawmakers. The complaint claimed the hotel charges \$316 to \$500 per night.

If the lawmakers are found to have violated the law, they can be fined twice the cost of the event.

In a statement Tuesday, Colorado Democratic Party Chair Shad Murib pointed to “dark money” groups for launching the complaints.

“Colorado Democrats hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards, and that includes allowing the Independent Ethics Commission to do its work without political games,” Murib said in the statement. “Lawmakers have already taken good-faith steps to address the situation before the IEC by making a sizable contribution to the Food Bank of the Rockies, regardless of whether they believe a violation occurred. If the filer were acting in good faith, these complaints would be withdrawn. I applaud Senator Lindsey Daugherty for taking swift action and appreciate her initiative.”

Coloradans deserve better than to be manipulated by a Washington, D.C. “dark money” outfit that hides its biggest donors, Murib added.

That appears to be a reference to the Working Families Party, which is aligned with progressive Democrats at the state Capitol, and which launched an “accountability campaign” last week.

Wynn Howell, state director for Working Families Power, said in a statement that the scandal is just one more sign of how One Main Street and other moneyed interests are trying to buy how the people’s business gets done.

“This corporate money warps our politics and saps resources from working families. It’s time for our representatives to choose sides: the people who elected them, or the corporations trying to buy them,” Howell said.

The Working Families Party is also a “dark money” group that does not disclose its largest funders, according to OpenSecrets.org.

Oregon Ethics Commission Finds Rep. Greg Smith Violated State Ethics Laws In Pursuit Of Raise

By: Shaanth Nanguneri – **OREGON CAPITAL CHRONICLES** - December 12, 2025

Oregon's longest-serving state representative broke state ethics laws when he tried to secure a \$66,000 raise for his work as an executive director at the Columbia Development Authority of Boardman, the state's government ethics watchdog found Friday.

Seven members of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission on Friday unanimously found that Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, a state legislator since 2000, used his position as a public official to secure a higher salary. He has long added onto his legislative salary with high-paying consulting contracts and side gigs supporting economic development efforts in eastern Oregon.

The commission on Tuesday voted during a special meeting to extend for 30 days its investigation into Smith and allow investigators to gather more information, but members decided on Friday that given the evidence they'd reviewed, he was in violation of state ethics laws. Smith was not present for the meeting, and the next step in the process could be a hearing where he can contest the findings or any other orders such as a fine.

Smith did not immediately respond to a text message from the Capital Chronicle seeking comment on Friday.

Smith has faced multiple ethics investigations during the last year, but Friday's decision centered on whether he failed to disclose conflicts of interest, and abused his position as a public official, when he sought a raise through funding from the U.S. Department of Defense for his work at the authority that had not been pre-approved by the authority's board.

The development authority is an intergovernmental organization meant to redevelop the site of a former military chemical depot, and it includes the Port of Umatilla, Umatilla County, Port of Morrow, Morrow County and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. It receives federal grant funding from the Office of Local Defense and Community Cooperation.

"Executive Director Smith's efforts as it relates to the pay increase were not only an attempt; rather, they resulted in an actual financial benefit to Executive Director Smith," a new, 43-page investigation from the commission reads. "The evidence establishes that Executive Director Smith used his position as Executive Director to obtain a pay increase for himself that had not been previously approved by the CDA Board."

Smith's salary for running the authority was \$129,000 in late 2023, an amount he wanted to increase to \$238,000, according to a letter he sent to the Columbia Development Authority board's chair in December 2023, though the investigation found no indication that the board took up such a raise for a vote.

Nevertheless, a 2024 grant application the authority sent to the defense department's Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation included mention of "a significant board-approved increase" in existing salaries beginning on April 1, 2024.

That grant application called for a new salary for Smith of \$195,000, the maximum pay allowed under the defense office's salary cap for grantees. Under a cost-sharing agreement, the federal government would have paid \$123,350 of the salary, and the local development authority would have paid \$71,650. But after finding out about the raise retroactively, the development authority's board revoked it and directed him to pay back the extra money he had received.

Casey Fenstermaker, a compliance and enforcement coordinator with the commission, reviewed documents and conducted a number of interviews, but did not have complete interviews with Columbia Development Authority board member J.D Tovey and Smith himself done by the meeting earlier this week.

In her latest report, she wrote that Smith failed to pay back the extra money as the board directed, and that Smith has not returned it.

"Executive Director Smith did not indicate to the Board that the grant application included a pay increase for himself," she wrote. "The Board eventually discovered that the OLDCC grant application included a pay increase for Executive Director Smith."

The commission has already opened four previous investigations into Smith this year. One, in March, resulted in him receiving a letter of education for failing to list Harney County, where he was a director for a local development authority, as a source of income on the annual economic interest statement he must file as an elected official. Responding to a 2024 ethics investigation, Smith reported that his household's gross annual income was more than \$1 million.

That includes his salary from the Columbia Development Authority, his legislative stipend, his wife's salary as his legislative assistant and income from his business.