ETHICS REPORTER
October 2025

Kentucky Legislative Ethics Commission
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Ethics Commission Hires Steven Pulliam as Executive Director

The Ethics Commission has appointed Steven Pulliam as the new Executive Director, effective October 14, 2025. He joined the Commission staff in December, 2024 as the General Counsel. He is originally from Frankfort, KY and received his law degree and undergraduate degree both from the University of Kentucky. After law school he clerked for Judge Roger Crittenden (ret.) in the Franklin Circuit Court before going on to serve as Deputy Bar Counsel for the KY Bar Association, General Counsel to the KY Executive Branch Ethics Commission, and Investigator for the LRC Office of Education Accountability. Please join us in congratulating Steven on his promotion!

Ethics Commission Job Opening

The Ethics Commission is seeking qualified individuals for the General Counsel position. If you or someone you know might be interested, please have them apply using the General Counsel job link located on the Commission's website before Monday, November 3, 2025.

Two-year registration for lobbyists and employers opens on December 1st

Employers' and legislative agents' registration with the Legislative Ethics Commission will expire on December 31, 2025. For your convenience, we will send out an email mid-November with instructions and a blank form, to all currently registered employers and legislative agents.

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 the registration is mailed with a check, the check should be payable to **Kentucky State Treasurer**.

Beginning November 15th, if you want to pay by credit card, please access our new online payment portal located on our website at https://klec.ky.gov. Once you have paid by credit card, the registration form(s) may be faxed, or scanned and e-mailed, along with the completed payment or paid receipt.

Beginning December 1, 2025, the Commission will start accepting completed registrations. Initial registration forms CANNOT be filed online. **Please remember, all forms must be completely filled out and the employer must sign the registration form of each legislative agent.**

If more information is needed, please contact the Commission at (502) 573-2863, or e-mail Donnita.Crittenden@kylegislature.gov or Lori.Smither@kylegislature.gov.

Refresher: What are some violations an Employer or Legislative Agent need to watch out for?

VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR LEGISLATIVE AGENTS AND EMPLOYERS

✓Failure to register with the Commission is a Class D felony.

✓Failure to keep a receipt or maintain a record of expenditures.

✓Failure to file updated registration statements with the Commission.

✓Offering, giving, or agreeing to give anything of value to a legislator, a candidate, or the spouse or child of a legislator or candidate.

✓A legislative agent is prohibited from serving as a campaign treasurer, and shall not directly solicit, control, or deliver a campaign contribution for a candidate or legislator.

✓A legislative agent is prohibited from making a campaign contribution to a legislator, a candidate, or a legislative campaign committee.

✓An employer is prohibited from making a campaign contribution to a legislator, a candidate, or a legislative campaign committee during a regular session of the General Assembly. (Note-this provision was not changed in the law, although the parallel provision for legislators running as statewide candidates was amended in 2022 to permit those legislators to accept employer campaign contributions during a regular session.)

✓An employer is prohibited from employing, appointing, or retaining a serving legislator or former legislator as a legislative agent until at least two years have elapsed from the date the legislator left office.

✓A legislative agent or employer is prohibited from engaging any person to lobby in exchange for compensation that is contingent in any way upon the passage, modification, or defeat of any legislation. No person is permitted to accept any engagement to lobby in exchange for compensation that is contingent in any way upon the passage, modification, or defeat of any legislation.

✓A legislative agent or lobbyist is prohibited from going upon the floor of either house of the General Assembly while the house is in session, except upon invitation of that house.

Newly-Registered and Terminated Lobbying Employers

The following businesses and organizations recently registered to lobby in Kentucky**: Be More Colorful, LLC, ChanceLight, Inc., Children & Nature Network, EdChoice Kentucky, Inc., Georgetown-Scott Co. Airport Corp., God's Pantry Food Bank, KY Orthotic & Prosthetic Assn., Louisville Galleria, LLC, Me+U Care, Natera, Performance Services, Prime Property Development, LLC, Tusk Montgomery Philanthropies, and WEconnect Health Management.**

No businesses or organizations recently terminated in Kentucky.

Ethics & Lobbying News from around the U.S.

New Limits on Gifts for Lawmakers and Who Can Give Them Are Coming in The New Year – Rhode Island

Common Cause Rhode Island pushed for ethics rule change to limit influence on lawmaking process

BY: Alexander Castro- **RHODE ISLAND CURRENT** - September 30, 2025

The Rhode Island Ethics Commission on Tuesday approved two proposed rule changes regarding gifts given to public officials: one which is likely to please some state lawmakers, and the other to satisfy the wishes of government watchdogs.

The first rule change increases the gift cap for public officials, who will soon be able to receive $50 single gifts, or $150 worth of gifts in aggregate in one year, from the same person. The previous limits were $25 and $75, respectively.

The proposal to increase the gift cap had virtually no public support and was related to failed legislation in the Rhode Island Senate earlier this year that would have increased the individual gift limit to $50. The dead bill was sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Frank Ciccone III, a Providence Democrat, and nine other senators.

The second measure widens the state's ethics code's definition of an "interested person" to include all lobbyists, including ones working on behalf of nonprofits. A loose stitch in ethics regulations allowed for a hypothetically limitless amounts of gifts from nonprofit lobbyists, who were technically absent in the code's definition of an "interested person."

The Ethics Commission affirmed both rule changes, each consisting of several line-by-line refinements to existing ethics code, via unanimous roll call votes. Commissioner Matthew D. Strauss was not present at Tuesday's meeting.

The newly modified rules are scheduled to take effect on Jan. 1, 2026, as the panel agreed to adopt a single effective date for all the changes to take effect. Ethics Commission Executive Director Jason Gramitt said his office will need time to compile the documents and revise the regulations.

"I'm not going to file immediately after today's meeting," Gramitt told the commission.

"There's some drafting I need to do, I need to make sure I've got certain forms filled out properly. I have some narratives I'm going to have to write and upload."

Gramitt said his office will also have to tweak the state's annual disclosure forms, which had removed a once-included section asking officials whether they received over $100 in gifts.

Since the previous limit was $75, that section was removed, but now it will need to return, Gramitt said. The question will make its return to 2027 disclosure filings in 2027, which will cover 2026.

Tuesday's decision concludes a nine-month decision-making process which began at the behest of Common Cause Rhode Island in December. The open government advocacy group pushed for the "interested person" regulations to include all lobbyists.

"It's disappointing they chose to raise the gift limits, even though they didn't receive any testimony asking them to raise the gift limits," John Marion, the executive director of Common Cause Rhode Island, said after the commission's vote.

Commissioner Scott Rabideau spoke in favor of the bigger gift limit from a municipal perspective, and he noted the $25 "applies to all municipal employees, to all of the people who serve on these little boards."

"The guy who delivers oil, who knows the members of the town council, but he also delivers all over the school — you know, those things happen in small towns," Rabideau said. "I think that going to $50 is not going to hurt."

Commissioner Frank Cenerini, a retired Rhode Island District Court judge, has previously voiced his support for raising the gift limit and did so again Tuesday, arguing from the premise that "people who enter public service do so for good reasons." He said the increased gift limit was simply a means of adjusting for inflation.

Marion was more pleased with the commission's adoption of the new rule language his group suggested, and called it "an important loophole that needed to be closed by the commission."

The rule is one which will affect Marion, too, since he is a registered lobbyist for his nonprofit good government group. Gramitt told the commission that the state's approximately 650 registered lobbyists will eventually be sent an email informing them of the rule change.
"John Marion, for instance, will receive an email," Gramitt said, motioning with his thumb backward to Marion, who was sitting in the audience.

"You can just hand deliver to him when he's here," added Commission Chair Lauren E. Jones.

The rule change bundles in a carveout for "food or beverage for immediate consumption at a reception or fundraiser to which all members of the General Assembly or statewide officers are invited and is hosted not more than once in any year by a not-for-profit entity that is not an interested person."

Another exception allows gift giving to public officials or employees from interested parties if the official "is not a member or employee of the state or municipal agency that the interested person is lobbying."

This is the first time the ethics commission has "voted to strengthen the state's ethics laws" since 2012, according to a Common Cause news release.

Jones noted this was the first time he completed a rulemaking procedure since joining the commission four years ago.

The remainder of the work now falls on Gramitt's shoulders. Before the vote, the executive director had laughed while explaining to commissioners what comes next.

"Quite a lot of paperwork," Gramitt said.

Ex-AT&T Illinois president could escape conviction after striking deal in Madigan bribery case

Under the terms of a so-called deferred prosecution agreement, prosecutors are expected to eventually seek dismissal of the 2022 indictment against Paul La Schiazza.

By Jon Seidel – **CHICAGO SUN TIMES** - Oct 14, 2025

The former AT&T Illinois president who allegedly bribed ex-state House Speaker Michael J. Madigan has agreed to resolve his prosecution by paying a $200,000 fine and admitting to most of the feds' accusations against him.

Still, Paul La Schiazza could walk away without a conviction if he holds up his end of a one-year deal made official Tuesday in the courtroom of U.S. District Judge Robert Gettleman.
It all comes more than a year after a jury failed to reach a verdict in the case.

Under the terms of the so-called deferred prosecution agreement, prosecutors are expected to eventually seek dismissal of the 2022 indictment against La Schiazza.

It would be highly unusual for a judge to object to that request. Still, Gettleman made clear to La Schiazza on Tuesday that he is not bound by the agreement. Rather, he said the deal came "as a bit of a surprise."

"This is a very generous agreement, I have to say," Gettleman said from the bench. "I think it's surprisingly generous."

La Schiazza's deal comes after two consecutive juries failed to reach any agreement on the allegations at issue. La Schiazza's September 2024 trial ended in a hung jury. Then, during the trial of Madigan that followed, prosecutors tried to convict the former speaker for his role in the same alleged plot.

While the jury that convicted Madigan found him guilty on 10 counts involving other schemes, it failed to reach any decision on the AT&T claims. Regardless, Madigan still wound-up surrendering Monday to a federal prison camp in West Virginia to serve a 7½-year sentence.

At the heart of the case against La Schiazza was legislation meant to help end AT&T Illinois' costly obligation to provide landline telephone service to all Illinois residents. It was known as its Carrier of Last Resort, or COLR, bill.

In entering into his deal Tuesday, La Schiazza largely admitted to the scheme for which he'd been charged.

Prosecutors say La Schiazza bribed Madigan in 2017 by paying $22,500 to former state Rep. Edward "Eddie" Acevedo (D-Chicago) while trying to finally pass the COLR legislation in Springfield. They also alleged that Madigan wanted to help Acevedo, who left the Legislature early in 2017, because of the increasing Latino population in Madigan's district.

The feds say Acevedo did hardly any work for the money.

During closing arguments in Madigan's trial, Madigan's attorney Dan Collins said there was no evidence that Acevedo campaigned for, or endorsed, Madigan.

"The suggestion Mike Madigan was concerned about reelection is way off base," Collins told the jury.

And, "If Eddie Acevedo didn't do as he signed up to do, that's on him," Collins added.

Madigan associate Michael McClain reached out to AT&T Illinois looking for a small contract for Acevedo in February 2017. Then, two days later, McClain told La Schiazza that Madigan had assigned McClain to the COLR legislation as a "special project," emails showed.

The contract for Acevedo suddenly became an urgent issue for La Schiazza more than a month later, on March 28, 2017, when he told his team he "got a call" and wanted them to "move quickly" on Acevedo's contract.

Thing is, no one at AT&T Illinois was particularly impressed with Acevedo. The longtime lawmaker had a bad reputation, and Republicans threatened to vote against AT&T's agenda if Acevedo wound up on the utility's payroll.

So, the utility funneled Acevedo's money through a firm belonging to lobbyist Tom Cullen. La Schiazza told his staff he had no objection to the arrangement, "as long as you are sure we will get credit and the box checked, and of course we have legal approval to engage Eddie this way."

The COLR bill became law after the state House and Senate voted July 1, 2017, to override a veto from then-Gov. Bruce Rauner. Madigan voted in favor of the bill and to override the veto.
Less than two weeks later, on July 12, 2017, La Schiazza was asked by Madigan's son, Andrew Madigan, to sponsor a nonprofit event "at the suggestion of our good friend Mike McClain." La Schiazza griped by email to a colleague that "this will be endless."

He later added, "We are on the friends and family plan now."

As part of the deal he struck Tuesday, La Schiazza admitted that "Acevedo was hired in hopes of ensuring that Madigan and no one else impeded the pending COLR legislation."

Acevedo did not face criminal charges directly related to the AT&T allegations. Rather, he served a six-month prison sentence for tax evasion. McClain also faces a two-year sentence for his role in a similar scheme involving ComEd. McClain is due to surrender Oct. 30.