

## TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE

### Chapter 556: Political Activities by Certain Public Entities and Individuals

#### Sec. 556.004. PROHIBITED ACTS OF AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS.

- (a) A state agency may not use any money under its control, including appropriated money, to finance or otherwise support the candidacy of a person for an office in the legislative, executive, or judicial branch of state government or of the government of the United States. This prohibition extends to the direct or indirect employment of a person to perform an action described by this subsection.
- (b) A state officer or employee may not use a state-owned or state-leased motor vehicle for a purpose described by Subsection (a).
- (c) A state officer or employee may not use official authority or influence or permit the use of a program administered by the state agency of which the person is an officer or employee to interfere with or affect the result of an election or nomination of a candidate or to achieve any other political purpose.
- (d) A state employee may not coerce, attempt to coerce, command, restrict, attempt to restrict, or prevent the payment, loan, or contribution of any thing of value to a person or political organization for a political purpose.
- (e) For purposes of Subsection (c), a state officer or employee does not interfere with or affect the results of an election or nomination if the individual's conduct is permitted by a law relating to the individual's office or employment and is not otherwise unlawful.

#### Sec. 556.005. EMPLOYMENT OF LOBBYIST.

- (a) A state agency may not use appropriated money to employ, as a regular full-time or part-time or contract employee, a person who is required by Chapter 305 to register as a lobbyist. Except for an institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code, a state agency may not use any money under its control to employ or contract with an individual who is required by Chapter 305 to register as a lobbyist.
- (b) A state agency may not use appropriated money to pay, on behalf of the agency or an officer or employee of the agency, membership dues to an organization that pays part or all of the salary of a person who is required by Chapter 305 to register as a lobbyist. This subsection does not apply to the payment by a state agency of membership fees under Chapter 81.
- (c) A state agency that violates subsection (a) is subject to a reduction of amounts appropriated for administration by the General Appropriations Act for the biennium following the biennium in which the violation occurs in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 for each violation.
- (d) A state agency administering a statewide retirement plan may enter into a contract to receive assistance or advice regarding the qualified tax status of the plan or on other federal matters affecting the administration of the state agency or its programs if the contractor is not required by chapter 305 to register as a lobbyist.

#### Sec. 556.0055. RESTRICTIONS ON LOBBYING EXPENDITURES

- (a) A political subdivision or private entity that receives state funds may not use the funds to pay:
  - (1) lobbying expenses incurred by the recipient of the funds;
  - (2) a person or entity that is required to register with the Texas Ethics Commission under Chapter 305;
  - (3) any partner, employee, employer, relative, contractor, consultant, or related entity of a person or entity described by Subdivision (2); or

(4) a person or entity that has been hired to represent associations or other entities for the purpose of affecting the outcome of legislation, agency rules, ordinances, or other government policies.

(b) A political subdivision or private entity that violates subsection (a) is not eligible to receive additional state funds.

**Sec. 556.006. LEGISLATIVE LOBBYING.**

- (a) A state agency may not use appropriated money to attempt to influence the passage or defeat of a legislative measure.
- (b) This section does not prohibit a state officer or employee from using state resources to provide public information or to provide information responsive to a request.

**Sec. 556.007. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT.**

A state employee who causes an employee to be discharged, demoted, or otherwise discriminated against for providing information under Section 556.006(b) or who violates Section 556.004(c) or (d) is subject to immediate termination of employment.

**Sec. 556.008. COMPENSATION PROHIBITION.**

A state agency may not use appropriated money to compensate a state officer or employee who violates Section 556.004(a), (b), or (c) or Section 556.005 or 556.006(a), or who is subject to termination under Section 556.007.

**Chapter 572: *Personal Financial Disclosure, Standards of Conduct, and conflict of Interest***  
**Subchapter C. *Standards of Conduct, and conflict of Interest Provisions***

**Sec. 572.051. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

A state officer or employee should not:

1. Accept or solicit any gift, favor, or service that might reasonably tend to influence the employee in the discharge of official duties or that the employee knows or should know is being offered with the intent to influence the employee's official conduct;
2. Accept other employment or engage in a business or professional activity that the employee might reasonably expect would require or induce the employee to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of the official position;
3. Accept other employment or compensation that could reasonably be expected to impair the employee's independence of judgment in the performance of the employee's official duties;
4. Make personal investments that could reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the employee's private interest and the public interest; or
5. Intentionally or knowingly solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit for having exercised the employee's official powers or performed the employee's official duties in favor of another.