To: Chair Remke, Commissioners Casher, Eskovitz, Wasserman, and Wynne

From: Erin V. Peth, Executive Director
Sukhi K. Brar, Senior Commission Counsel and Legislative Coordinator

Subject: Legislative Update

Date: January 5, 2015

The Legislature began the 2015-2016 Legislative session on December 1, 2014. This report includes a summary of the bills currently pending before the Legislature that would impact the Political Reform Act (the “Act”).

**Political Reform Act Bills Pending in the Legislature**

**SB 21 (Hill)**

Introduced: December 1, 2014

**Existing Law**

The Act prohibits public officials from receiving gifts in excess of $440 in value from a single source in a calendar year, with exceptions. One exception to this gift limit is for payments made to public officials for specified types of travel that are reasonably related to a legislative or governmental purpose, or to an issue of state, national, or international public policy.

**Proposed Law**

This bill would require a nonprofit organization that makes travel payments for an elected state officer or local elected officeholder to disclose the names of donors
responsible for funding the payments. The bill would also require a person who receives a gift of a travel payment from any source to report the travel destination on his or her Statement of Economic Interests.

**Status: Introduced**

**AB 10 (Gatto)**

Introduced: December 1, 2014

**Existing Law**

The Act prohibits a public official at any level of state or local government from making, participating in making, or in any way attempting to use his or her official position to influence a governmental decision in which the public official knows or has reason to know that he or she has a financial interest. A public official has a financial interest in a governmental decision if it is reasonably foreseeable that the decision will have a material financial effect, distinguishable from its effect on the public generally, on a business entity in which the public official has a direct or indirect investment worth $2,000 or more, real property in which the public official has a direct or indirect interest worth $2,000 or more, and sources of income aggregating $500 or more in value within 12 months prior to the time when the decision is made. The Act requires certain public officials to file a Statement of Economic Interests disclosing investments, real property interests, and income within specified periods of assuming or leaving office, and annually while holding the office. The Act requires the disclosures to include information indicating, within a specified value range, the fair market value of investments or interests in real property and the aggregate value of income received from a source.

**Proposed Law**

This bill would increase the thresholds at which a public official has a disqualifying financial interest in sources of income from $500 to $1,000, investments in business entities from $2,000 to $5,000, and in interests in real property from $2,000 to $10,000. The bill would also make conforming adjustments to the thresholds at which income, investments, and interests in real property must be disclosed on a public official’s Statement of Economic Interests. The bill would revise the dollar amounts associated with the value ranges for reporting the value of economic interests. Additionally, this bill would require certain public officials to disclose information on the official’s Statement of Economic Interests relating to governmental decisions for which the public official had a disqualifying financial interest.

**Status: Introduced**
SB 21, as introduced, Hill. Political Reform Act of 1974: gifts of travel.

The Political Reform Act of 1974 provides for the comprehensive regulation of campaign financing and related matters, including the reporting of gifts, as defined. The act prohibits specified officers from receiving gifts in excess of $440 in value from a single source in a calendar year. The act exempts gift payments for the actual costs of specified types of travel that are reasonably related to a legislative or governmental purpose, or to an issue of state, national, or international public policy, from the annual limit on the value of gifts from a single source.

This bill would require a nonprofit organization that pays for these types of travel for an elected state officer or local elected officeholder to disclose the names of donors responsible for funding the payments, as specified. The bill would require a person who receives a gift of a travel payment from any source to report the travel destination on his or her statement of economic interests.

A violation of the Act’s provisions is punishable as a misdemeanor. By expanding the scope of an existing crime, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.
This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

The Political Reform Act of 1974, an initiative measure, provides that the Legislature may amend the act to further the act’s purposes upon a \( \frac{2}{3} \) vote of each house and compliance with specified procedural requirements.

This bill would declare that it furthers the purposes of the act.

Vote: \( \frac{2}{3} \). Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 87207 of the Government Code is amended to read:

87207. (a) When income is required to be reported under this article, the statement shall contain, except as provided in subdivision (b):

(1) The name and address of each source of income aggregating five hundred dollars ($500) or more in value, or fifty dollars ($50) or more in value if the income was a gift, and a general description of the business activity, if any, of each source.

(2) A statement whether the aggregate value of income from each source, or in the case of a loan, the highest amount owed to each source, was at least five hundred dollars ($500) but did not exceed one thousand dollars ($1,000), whether it was in excess of one thousand dollars ($1,000) but was not greater than ten thousand dollars ($10,000), whether it was greater than ten thousand dollars ($10,000) but not greater than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000), or whether it was greater than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000).

(3) A description of the consideration, if any, for which the income was received.

(4) In the case of a gift, the amount and the date on which the gift was received, and the travel destination for purposes of a gift that is a travel payment, advance, or reimbursement.

(5) In the case of a loan, the annual interest rate, the security, if any, given for the loan, and the term of the loan.

(b) When the filer’s pro rata share of income to a business entity, including income to a sole proprietorship, is required to be reported under this article, the statement shall contain:
(1) The name, address, and a general description of the business activity of the business entity.

(2) The name of every person from whom the business entity received payments if the filer’s pro rata share of gross receipts from that person was equal to or greater than ten thousand dollars ($10,000) during a calendar year.

(c) When if a payment, including an advance or reimbursement, for travel is required to be reported pursuant to this section, it may be reported on a separate travel reimbursement schedule which shall be included in the filer’s statement of economic interest. A filer who chooses not to use the travel schedule shall disclose payments for travel as a gift, unless it is clear from all surrounding circumstances that the services provided were equal to or greater in value than the payments for the travel, in which case the travel may be reported as income.

SEC. 2. Section 89506 of the Government Code is amended to read:

89506. (a) Payments, advances, or reimbursements for travel, including actual transportation and related lodging and subsistence that is reasonably related to a legislative or governmental purpose, or to an issue of state, national, or international public policy, are not prohibited or limited by this chapter if either of the following applies:

(1) The travel is in connection with a speech given by the elected state officer, local elected officeholder, candidate for elected elective state office or local elective office, an individual specified in Section 87200, member of a state board or commission, or designated employee of a state or local government agency, the lodging and subsistence expenses are limited to the day immediately preceding, the day of, and the day immediately following the speech, and the travel is within the United States.

(2) The travel is provided by a government, a governmental agency, a foreign government, a governmental authority, a bona fide public or private educational institution, as defined in Section 203 of the Revenue and Taxation Code, a nonprofit organization that is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or by a person domiciled outside the United States who substantially satisfies the requirements for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
Gifts of travel not described in subdivision (a) are subject to the limits in Section 89503.

Subdivision (a) applies only to travel that is reported on the recipient’s statement of economic interests.

For purposes of this section, a gift of travel does not include any of the following:

1. Travel that is paid for from campaign funds, as permitted by Article 4 (commencing with Section 89510), or that is a contribution.
2. Travel that is provided by the agency of a local elected officeholder, an elected state officer, member of a state board or commission, an individual specified in Section 87200, or a designated employee.
3. Travel that is reasonably necessary in connection with a bona fide business, trade, or profession and that satisfies the criteria for federal income tax deduction for business expenses in Sections 162 and 274 of the Internal Revenue Code, unless the sole or predominant activity of the business, trade, or profession is making speeches.
4. Travel that is excluded from the definition of a gift by any other provision of this title.

This section does not apply to payments, advances, or reimbursements for travel and related lodging and subsistence permitted or limited by Section 170.9 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

(1) A nonprofit organization that makes payments, advances, or reimbursements that total more than ten thousand dollars ($10,000) in a calendar year, or that total more than five thousand dollars ($5,000) in a calendar year for a single person, for travel by an elected state officer or local elected officeholder as described in subdivision (a) shall disclose to the Commission the names of the donors responsible for funding those payments, advances, or reimbursements. The disclosure of donor names shall be limited to donors who donated one thousand dollars ($1,000) or more to the nonprofit organization in a calendar year and who knew or had reason to know that the donation would be used for a payment, advance, or reimbursement for travel by an elected state officer or local elected officeholder as described in subdivision (a).
(2) A donor knows or has reason to know that his or her
donation will be used in the manner described in paragraph (1)
under any of the following conditions:
(A) The donor directed the nonprofit organization to use the
donation to make a payment, advance, or reimbursement for travel
by an elected state officer or local elected officeholder as described
in subdivision (a).
(B) The donor made the donation in response to a message or
solicitation for donations for the stated purpose of making a
payment, advance, or reimbursement for travel by an elected state
officer or local elected officeholder as described in subdivision
(a).
(C) The donor, or an agent, employee, or representative of the
donor, accompanied an elected state officer or local elected
officeholder for any portion of travel as described in subdivision
(a).
(3) For purposes of Sections 87103, 87207, and 89503, a
nonprofit organization that makes payments, advances, or
reimbursements for travel by an elected state officer or local
elected officeholder as described in subdivision (a) is the source
of the gift unless the nonprofit organization is acting as an
intermediary or agent of the donor. If the nonprofit organization
is acting as an intermediary or agent of the donor, all of the
following apply:
(A) The donor to the nonprofit organization is the source of the
gift.
(B) The donor shall be identified as a financial interest under
Section 87103.
(C) The gift shall be reported as required by Section 87207.
(D) The gift shall be subject to the limitations on gifts specified
in Section 89503.
SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to
Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because
the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school
district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or
infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty
for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of
the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within
the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California
Constitution.
SEC. 4. The Legislature finds and declares that this bill furthers the purposes of the Political Reform Act of 1974 within the meaning of subdivision (a) of Section 81012 of the Government Code.
ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 10

Introduced by Assembly Member Gatto

December 1, 2014

An act to amend Sections 82033, 82034, 87103, 87206, and 87207 of, and to add Sections 87206.5 and 87211 to, the Government Code, relating to the Political Reform Act of 1974.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST


The Political Reform Act of 1974 prohibits a public official at any level of state or local government from making, participating in making, or in any way attempting to use his or her official position to influence a governmental decision in which the public official knows or has reason to know that he or she has a financial interest. A public official has a financial interest in a governmental decision if it is reasonably foreseeable that the decision will have a material financial effect, distinguishable from its effect on the public generally, on a business entity in which the public official has a direct or indirect investment worth $2,000 or more, real property in which the public official has a direct or indirect interest worth $2,000 or more, and sources of income aggregating $500 or more in value within 12 months prior to the time when the decision is made.

The Political Reform Act of 1974 requires persons holding specified public offices to file disclosures of investments, real property interests, and income within specified periods of assuming or leaving office, and annually while holding the office. The act requires the disclosures to include a statement indicating, within a specified value range, the fair
market value of investments or interests in real property and the aggregate value of income received from a source.

This bill would increase the thresholds at which a public official has a disqualifying financial interest in sources of income from $500 to $1,000, in investments in business entities from $2,000 to $5,000, and in interests in real property from $2,000 to $10,000.

The bill would make conforming adjustments to the thresholds at which income, investments, and interests in real property must be disclosed on a public official’s statement of economic interests. The bill would also revise the dollar amounts associated with the value ranges for reporting the value of economic interests.

This bill would require certain public officials to disclose information on the official’s statement of economic interests relating to governmental decisions for which the public official had a disqualifying financial interest, as specified.

Existing law makes a knowing or willful violation of the act a misdemeanor and subjects offenders to criminal penalties.

By creating additional crimes, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

The Political Reform Act of 1974, an initiative measure, provides that the Legislature may amend the act to further the act’s purposes upon a 2/3 vote of each house and compliance with specified procedural requirements.

This bill would declare that it furthers the purposes of the act.


The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 82033 of the Government Code is amended to read:

82033. “Interest in real property” includes any leasehold, beneficial or ownership interest or an option to acquire such an interest in real property located in the jurisdiction owned directly, indirectly or beneficially by the public official, or other filer, or
his or her immediate family if the fair market value of the interest
is two ten thousand dollars ($2,000) ($10,000) or more. Interests
in real property of an individual includes a pro rata share of
interests in real property of any business entity or trust in which
the individual or immediate family owns, directly, indirectly or
beneficially, a 10-percent interest or greater.

SEC. 2. Section 82034 of the Government Code is amended
to read:

82034. “Investment” means any financial interest in or security
issued by a business entity, including, but not limited to, common
stock, preferred stock, rights, warrants, options, debt instruments,
and any partnership or other ownership interest owned directly,
indirectly, or beneficially by the public official, or other filer, or
his or her immediate family, if the business entity or any parent,
subsidiary, or otherwise related business entity has an interest in
real property in the jurisdiction, or does business or plans to do
business in the jurisdiction, or has done business within the
jurisdiction at any time during the two years prior to the time any
statement or other action is required under this title. An asset shall
not be deemed an investment unless its fair market value equals
or exceeds two five thousand dollars ($2,000) ($5,000). The term
“investment” does not include a time or demand deposit in a
financial institution, shares in a credit union, any insurance policy,
interest in a diversified mutual fund registered with the Securities
and Exchange Commission under the Investment Company Act
of 1940 or in a common trust fund created pursuant to Section
1564 1585 of the Financial Code, interest in a government
defined-benefit pension plan, or any bond or other debt instrument
issued by any government or government agency. Investments of
an individual includes a pro rata share of investments of any
business entity, mutual fund, or trust in which the individual or
immediate family owns, directly, indirectly, or beneficially, a
10-percent interest or greater. The term “parent, subsidiary or
otherwise related business entity” shall be specifically defined by
regulations of the commission.

SEC. 3. Section 87103 of the Government Code is amended
to read:

87103. A public official has a financial interest in a decision
within the meaning of Section 87100 if it is reasonably foreseeable
that the decision will have a material financial effect,
distinguishable from its effect on the public generally, on the
official, a member of his or her immediate family, or on any of
the following:
(a) Any business entity in which the public official has a direct
or indirect investment worth \( \text{two five thousand dollars} \) \( ($2,000) \) \( ($5,000) \) or more.
(b) Any real property in which the public official has a direct
or indirect interest worth \( \text{two ten thousand dollars} \) \( ($2,000) \) \( ($10,000) \) or more.
(c) Any source of income, except gifts or loans by a commercial
lending institution made in the regular course of business on terms
available to the public without regard to official status, aggregating
\( \text{five hundred dollars} \) \( ($500) \) \( \text{one thousand dollars} \) \( ($1,000) \) or more
in value provided or promised to, received by, the public official
within 12 months prior to the time when the decision is made.
(d) Any business entity in which the public official is a director,
officer, partner, trustee, employee, or holds any position of
management.
(e) Any donor of, or any intermediary or agent for a donor of,
a gift or gifts aggregating \( \text{two hundred fifty dollars} \) \( ($250) \) or more
in value provided to, received by, or promised to the public official
within 12 months prior to the time when the decision is made. The
amount of the value of gifts specified by this subdivision shall be
adjusted biennially by the commission to equal the same amount
determined by the commission pursuant to subdivision (f) of
Section 89503.
For purposes of this section, indirect investment or interest means
any investment or interest owned by the spouse or dependent child
of a public official, by an agent on behalf of a public official, or
by a business entity or trust in which the official, the official’s
agents, spouse, and dependent children own directly, indirectly,
or beneficially a 10-percent interest or greater.
SEC. 4. Section 87206 of the Government Code is amended
to read:
87206. If an investment or an interest in real property is
required to be disclosed under this article, the statement shall
contain all of the following:
(a) A statement of the nature of the investment or interest.
(b) The name of the business entity in which each investment
is held, and a general description of the business activity in which
the business entity is engaged. However, if the filer has a financial interest in the business entity pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 87103, the filer shall provide a thorough and detailed description of the business entity’s activities and disclose the names of all business partners who share a financial interest in the business entity, based on criteria established by the Commission.

(c) The address or other precise location of the real property.

(d)

(c) A statement whether indicating which of the following represents the fair market value of the investment or interest in real property equals or exceeds two thousand dollars ($2,000) but does not exceed ten thousand dollars ($10,000), whether it exceeds ten thousand dollars ($10,000) but does not exceed one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000), whether it exceeds one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000) but does not exceed one million dollars ($1,000,000), or whether it exceeds one million dollars ($1,000,000):-

(1) At least five thousand dollars ($5,000) but not greater than ten thousand dollars ($10,000).

(2) Greater than ten thousand dollars ($10,000) but not greater than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000).

(3) Greater than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000) but not greater than two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000).

(4) Greater than two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000) but not greater than five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000).

(5) Greater than five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000) but not greater than one million dollars ($1,000,000).

(6) Greater than one million dollars ($1,000,000) but not greater than two million dollars ($2,000,000).

(7) Greater than two million dollars ($2,000,000).

(d) In the case of a statement filed under Sections 87203 or 87204, if the investment or interest in real property was partially or wholly acquired or disposed of during the period covered by the statement, the date of acquisition or disposal.

(f) For purposes of disclosure under this article, “interest in real property” does not include the principal residence of the filer or any other property which the filer utilizes exclusively as the personal residence of the filer.

SEC. 5. Section 87206.5 is added to the Government Code, to read:
87206.5. (a) If an interest in real property is required to be disclosed under this article, the statement shall contain all of the following:

1. A statement of the nature of the interest.
2. The address or other precise location of the real property.
3. A statement indicating which of the following represents the fair market value of the interest in real property:
   (A) At least ten thousand dollars ($10,000) but not greater than two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000).
   (B) Greater than two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000) but not greater than five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000).
   (C) Greater than five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000) but not greater than seven hundred fifty thousand dollars ($750,000).
   (D) Greater than seven hundred fifty thousand dollars ($750,000) but not greater than one million dollars ($1,000,000).
   (E) Greater than one million dollars ($1,000,000) but not greater than two million dollars ($2,000,000).
   (F) Greater than two million dollars ($2,000,000).
4. In the case of a statement filed under Section 87203 or 87204, if the interest in real property was partially or wholly acquired or disposed of during the period covered by the statement, the date of acquisition or disposal.

(b) For purposes of disclosure under this article, “interest in real property” does not include the principal residence of the filer or any other property that the filer utilizes exclusively as the personal residence of the filer.

SEC. 6. Section 87207 of the Government Code is amended to read:

87207. (a) When income is required to be reported under this article, the statement shall contain, except as provided in subdivision (b), all of the following:

1. The name and address of each source of income aggregating five hundred dollars ($500) one thousand dollars ($1,000) or more in value, or fifty dollars ($50) or more in value if the income was a gift, and a general description of the business activity, if any, of each source. However, if the source of income is a business entity in which the filer has a financial interest pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 87103, the filer shall provide a thorough and detailed
description of the business entity's activities, based on criteria established by the Commission.

(2) A statement whether indicating which of the following represents the aggregate value of income from each source, or in the case of a loan, the highest amount owed to each source, was at least five hundred dollars ($500) but did not exceed one thousand dollars ($1,000), whether it was in excess of one thousand dollars ($1,000) but was not greater than ten thousand dollars ($10,000), whether it was greater than ten thousand dollars ($10,000) but not greater than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000), or whether it was greater than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000).

source:

(A) At least one thousand dollars ($1,000) but not greater than ten thousand dollars ($10,000).

(B) Greater than ten thousand dollars ($10,000) but not greater than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000).

(C) Greater than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000) but not greater than two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000).

(D) Greater than two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000) but not greater than five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000).

(E) Greater than five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000).

(3) A description of the consideration, if any, for which the income was received.

(4) In the case of a gift, the amount and the date on which the gift was received.

(5) In the case of a loan, the annual interest rate, the security, if any, given for the loan, and the term of the loan.

(b) When the filer’s pro rata share of income to a business entity, including income to a sole proprietorship, is required to be reported under this article, the statement shall contain the following:

(1) The name, address, and a thorough and detailed description of the business activity of the business entity.

(2) The name of every person from whom the business entity received payments if the filer’s pro rata share of gross receipts from that person was equal to or greater than ten thousand dollars ($10,000) during a calendar year.

(c) When a payment, including an advance or reimbursement, for travel is required to be reported pursuant to this section, it may be reported on a separate travel reimbursement schedule which shall be included in the filer’s statement of economic interest. A
filer who chooses not to use the travel schedule shall disclose payments for travel as a gift, unless it is clear from all surrounding circumstances that the services provided were equal to or greater in value than the payments for the travel, in which case the travel may be reported as income.

SEC. 7. Section 87211 is added to the Government Code, to read:

87211. (a) A public official who holds an office specified in Section 87200 shall disclose on his or her statement of economic interests each governmental decision for which a financial interest resulted in the public official’s disqualification from making, participating in making, or in any way attempting to use his or her official position to influence that governmental decision pursuant to Section 87100 or, for a Member of the Legislature, Section 87102.5. The disclosure shall identify the governmental decision, the date that the governmental decision was made or considered, the financial interest that created the conflict of interests, and any other relevant information that the Commission deems appropriate.

(b) The disclosures required by this section are in addition to any other required disclosures, including, but not limited to, the requirements of Section 87105.

SEC. 8. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIIIB of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

SEC. 9. The Legislature finds and declares that this bill furthers the purposes of the Political Reform Act of 1974 within the meaning of subdivision (a) of Section 81012 of the Government Code.