

Senate Leaders Introduce Rules of Ethical Conduct

HARRISBURG – Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati (R-25), Senate Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi (R-9), and Senate Democratic Leader Robert Mellow (D-22) today announced that they will jointly introduce a set of Rules of Ethical Conduct for the state Senate.

“Events over the past several years have shown that we need to formalize a clear set of rules so that everyone understands what is permissible and what is not,” said Senator Scarnati. “The Senate Rules of Ethical Conduct are the result of months of work, and I believe they achieve that objective.”

“Over the past three years, we have made good progress in terms of reforming state government,” said Senator Pileggi. “It is important to continue that work to help re-establish public confidence in the Legislature, and these rules are another significant step forward.”

“Senators and Senate staff will know what conduct is acceptable,” Senator Mellow said. “The new rules are clear, easily understood and meaningful. They provide guidelines that all can follow.”

The Senate Rules of Ethical Conduct include:

- No Senate employee may conduct any campaign activity on Senate work time.
- No campaign activity may be conducted in a Senate office or with Senate resources.
- The solicitation or receipt of campaign contributions on Senate work time or with Senate resources is prohibited.
- No Senate employee may serve as an officer on a campaign committee or a campaign finance committee on behalf of any Senator or Senate candidate.
- No Senate employee may be required to perform campaign activities or to make campaign contributions.
- No Senate employee may be required to perform any non-work-related task.
- Senate mailing lists and email lists may only be used for legislative purposes, and cannot be sold or given to any other entity, including campaigns.
- Senate employees who are responsible for taking or recommending official actions are required to file Financial Interest Statements with the Secretary of the Senate.

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- No Senate-funded newsletter may be sent within 60 days of an election.
- Annual training shall be provided to all senators and all Senate employees related to the Senate Rules of Ethical Conduct, the Ethics Act, and the Lobbyist Disclosure Act.

Any alleged violations of the Senate Rules of Ethical Conduct would first be investigated by the Secretary of the Senate. If a more detailed investigation is warranted and the subject of the report is a senator, the matter will be referred to the Senate Committee on Ethics and Official Conduct. If the subject of the report is an employee, an independent party will conduct the investigation.

Sanctions for violations by an employee can range from a warning to termination of employment, depending on the circumstances. Sanctions for violations by a senator can range from a warning to requiring restitution and any other sanction provided for under the Pennsylvania Constitution.

Senator Pileggi, chairman of the Senate Rules Committee, also said that he will schedule a public hearing to receive public input on the proposed rules before they are considered by the full Senate.

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CONTACTS:

Drew Crompton (Senator Scarnati), dcrompton@pasen.gov, (717) 787-7084

Erik Arneson (Senator Pileggi), earneson@pasen.gov, (717) 787-4712

Lisa Scullin (Senator Mellow), lscullin@pasenate.com, (717) 787-6481