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To "Niki Tennant" <Niki_Tennant@longbeach.gov>
cc
bcc

08/25/2008 06:41 PM

Subject RE: Sacramento lobbyist ordinance - please review

#2
08-0882

History:  This message has been replied to and forwarded.

Niki and Bonnie,

Thank you for sending me the Sacramento ordinance. If you are proposing an ordinance like this for Long Beach, I would SUPPORT such an ordinance.

I served on the Ethics Task Force with several others and was one of those who drafted the recommendations. This ordinance is the type of ordinance we envisioned because it establishes a low registration fee (\$100) and reports could be filed using a simple format, disclosing the name of the lobbyists, the clients and the general lobbying matters. Also, importantly, this ordinance sets a rather high threshold for qualification -- one must earn \$3,200 or spend 100 hours+ during 3 consecutive months while engaged in lobbying to be required to register as a lobbyist.

If there is a desire to reduce the scope of the Sacramento ordinance, you could delete Section 2.15.120(d), which requires lobbyists to report campaign contributions. Since contributions are already reported in campaign filings, I don't see the need for additional reporting, i.e., the public can already find out who is donating to whom so this is duplicative.

Also, I think you could delete provisions such as those in Section 2.15.170 aimed at prohibiting "deceptive" lobbying. Lobbyists, like anyone else, should have some latitude to argue positions on public policy matters without being worried some city official might take some action against them for being deceptive. In my experience, most lobbyists advocate for their clients in a truthful manner -- otherwise they would lose credibility and become ineffective as lobbyists. I think that is enough deterrent.

As a final note, the ordinance could also be improved if was further clarified that one must willfully and knowingly violate the ordinance to be subject to civil or criminal sanctions. That way, lobbyists who try in good faith to report their activity will not be penalized for small technical. Such clarification might give the lobbyists some comfort.

I think it is time for Long Beach to join the many other cities that provide some transparency to lobbying activity. It is somewhat mystifying why Long Beach does not already have a lobby activity reporting ordinance. As always, do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of more assistance.

Thanks, Doug

From: Niki Tennant [mailto:Niki_Tennant@longbeach.gov]
Sent: Mon 8/25/2008 4:45 PM
To: Doug Haubert
Subject: Sacramento lobbyist ordinance - please review