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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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H.B. 358
134th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Lanese and Manning

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CORRECTED VERSION*

SUMMARY

- Raises the threshold dollar amount from over \$75 to over \$150 for gifts required to be disclosed by public officials on their financial disclosure statement filed under the Ethics Law.
- Requires gifts from legislative agents to members of the General Assembly to be disclosed to the Joint Legislative Ethics Committee when the gift is over \$150, instead of gifts over \$25.
- Requires all reported gifts to be organized by value into five different tiers, allowing good faith reasonable estimates of value when the exact amount cannot be ascertained.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Dollar threshold for reporting gifts

Continuing law requires that certain public officials, including all persons elected to or running for any state, county, or city office, file a financial disclosure statement with the appropriate ethics commission.¹ The financial disclosure statement is comprehensive, requiring disclosure of income sources, property interests, debts, investments, and other items.² On this

* This version clarifies the effects of the bill on reporting requirements for members of the General Assembly regarding gifts from legislative agents.

¹ Joint Legislative Ethics Committee: for matters relating to General Assembly members and employees, Legislative Service Commission employees, and General Assembly candidates. Board of Professional Conduct: for matters relating to judicial officers and employees, and candidates for judicial office; Ohio Ethics Commission: for matters relating to all other persons. R.C. 102.01, not in the bill.

² R.C. 102.02. See this section for a list of persons required to file a financial disclosure statement, and for a description of what the statement requires.

statement, under current law a filer must disclose the source of any gifts received within the prior year with a value over \$75, with exceptions for testamentary gifts and gifts from family members.

The bill raises this threshold to gifts over \$150 instead of over \$75.

Additionally, under current law, General Assembly members must report any gifts received from legislative agents (lobbyists) that are more than \$25 in value.

The bill changes this reporting requirement to gifts that are more than \$150.³ Note, however, that continuing law limits gifts from legislative agents to General Assembly members to no more than \$75 cumulatively per year.⁴ Under the bill, no legal gift from a legislative agent would be required to be reported.

Reporting gifts by value

The bill also requires a filer's disclosure statement to identify gifts by value, organized into five ranges of amounts. The report must identify the amount of every gift by value in the following ranges: \$150 to \$249; \$250 to \$999; \$1,000 to \$9,999; \$10,000 to \$99,999; and \$100,000 or more. Current law contains no requirement like this.

If it is impractical or impossible to determine exact dollar amounts or values of gifts, the bill allows the use of good faith estimates based upon reasonable accounting procedures.⁵

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	06-22-21

ANHB358IN-CORRECTED-134/ks

³ R.C. 102.02(A)(2)(g).

⁴ R.C. 102.031, not in the bill.

⁵ *Id.* n. 3.