



Local Government Ethics Reform (Watch)

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HB 7003 (House Public Integrity & Ethics Committee; Metz) revises provisions in the state Ethics Code regarding financial disclosure, conflicting employment and contractual relationships, voting conflicts, and the regulation of persons who lobby before local governments. The bill would require elected municipal mayors and governing board officers of municipalities with \$10 million or more in revenues as defined in the bill to file the full public disclosure of financial interests (Form 6), rather than the current requirement to file the lesser detailed financial disclosure (Form 1). The bill modifies current law on voting conflicts. If an elected official has a conflict on a matter, current law requires the official to disclose the conflict and prohibits the official from voting on it. The official may still participate in any discussion on the matter prior to the vote. The bill would prohibit a public officer from participating in any discussion on a matter without first disclosing the existence of the conflict. The bill modifies the current law restriction on conflicting employment or contractual relationships by providing that if a public officer or employee of an agency holds a material interest in a business entity other than a publicly traded entity, or is an officer, director or member who manages such an entity, the contractual relationships held by the business entity would be deemed to be held by the public officer or employee. The bill also establishes a statewide registration and reporting process for persons who "lobby" local governmental entities, as defined in the bill. It preempts to the state local-government lobbyist registration requirements and prohibits the imposition of any registration fees by local governments, but authorizes local governments to impose other regulations on lobbying activities, such as compensation and similar disclosure requirements (O'Hara)