

House Bill 973

By: Representatives Jones of the 47th, Burns of the 159th, England of the 116th, Trammell of the 132nd, and Nix of the 69th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 5 of Title 21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to ethics
2 in government, so as to provide that lobbyists shall acknowledge receiving, reading, and
3 agreeing to abide by the sexual harassment policy of the General Assembly as a condition
4 to lobbyist registration; to provide that violation of the sexual harassment policy by a lobbyist
5 shall be grounds for sanctioning such lobbyist; to provide that complaints regarding violation
6 of the sexual harassment policy of the General Assembly by any lobbyist may be reported
7 to the Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission by the
8 General Assembly with recommendations for sanctions; to provide for related matters; to
9 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

11 **SECTION 1.**

12 Chapter 5 of Title 21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to ethics in
13 government, is amended by revising subsections (b) and (d) of Code Section 21-5-71,
14 relating to registration required, application for registration, supplemental registration,
15 expiration, docket, fees, identification cards, public rosters, and exemptions, as follows:

16 "(b) Each lobbyist who is required to register under this article shall file an application for
17 registration with the commission. The application shall be verified by the applicant and
18 shall contain:

19 (1) The applicant's name, address, and telephone number;

20 (2) The name, address, and telephone number of the person or agency that employs,
21 appoints, or authorizes the applicant to lobby on its behalf;

22 (3) A statement of the general business or purpose of each person, firm, corporation,
23 association, or agency the applicant represents;

24 (4) If the applicant represents a membership group other than an agency or corporation,
25 the general purpose and approximate number of members of the organization;

(5) A statement signed by the person or agency employing, appointing, or authorizing the applicant to lobby on its behalf;

(6) If the applicant is a lobbyist attempting to influence rule making or purchasing by a state agency or agencies, the name of the state agency or agencies before which the applicant engages in lobbying;

(7) A statement disclosing each individual or entity on whose behalf the applicant is registering if such individual or entity has agreed to pay him or her an amount exceeding \$10,000.00 in a calendar year for lobbying activities; ~~and~~

(8) A statement verifying that the applicant has not been convicted of a felony involving moral turpitude in the courts of this state or an offense that, had it occurred in this state, would constitute a felony involving moral turpitude under the laws of this state or, if the applicant has been so convicted, a statement identifying such conviction, the date thereof, a copy of the person's sentence, and a statement that more than ten years have elapsed since the completion of his or her sentence; and

(9) A statement by the applicant verifying that the applicant has received the Georgia General Assembly Employee Sexual Harassment Policy as set forth in the Georgia General Assembly Handbook, has read and understands the policy, and agrees to abide by the policy.

The commission shall retain on file the statement required pursuant to paragraph (9) of this subsection and any renewal statements under subsection (d) of this Code section for the duration of the lobbyist's registration period. A copy of such statement shall be sent to the Legislative Fiscal Office."

"(d) Each registration under this Code section shall expire on December 31 of each year. The commission may establish renewal procedures for those applicants desiring continuous registrations. Previously filed information may be incorporated by reference; provided, however, that the statement regarding the sexual harassment policy required under paragraph (9) of subsection (b) of this Code section shall be signed and filed each year as a part of the renewal process."

SECTION 2.

Said chapter is further amended by adding a new subsection to Code Section 21-5-72, relating to denial, suspension, or revocation of registration, reinstatement, and civil penalty, to read as follows:

"(a.1) In addition to other penalties provided in this article, the commission may by order suspend or revoke the registration of a lobbyist or impose a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000.00 for each violation of the sexual harassment policy of the General Assembly; provided, however, that a civil penalty not to exceed \$10,000.00 may be imposed for a

62 second occurrence of a violation of such policy and a civil penalty not to exceed
63 \$25,000.00 may be imposed for each third or subsequent occurrence of a violation of such
64 policy. The commission may receive reports of violations of the sexual harassment policy
65 of the General Assembly by lobbyists and recommendations for sanctions from the
66 Legislative Services Committee of the General Assembly."

67 **SECTION 3.**

68 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.