

**TITLE 25. PUBLIC OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES; PUBLIC RECORDS**  
**CHAPTER 4. ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT**  
**ARTICLE 1. MISSISSIPPI ETHICS COMMISSION**  
**Miss. Code Ann. § 25-4-25 (2011)**

**§ 25-4-25. Persons required to file statement of economic interest**

Each of the following individuals shall file a statement of economic interest with the commission in accordance with the provisions of this chapter:

- (a) Persons elected by popular vote, excluding United States Senators and United States Representatives, to any office, whether it be legislative, executive or judicial, and whether it be statewide, district, county, municipal or any other political subdivision, with the exception of members of boards of levee commissioners and election commissioners;
- (b) Members of local school boards that administer public funds, regardless of whether such members are elected or appointed;
- (c) Persons who are candidates for public office or who are appointed to fill a vacancy in an office who, if elected, would be required to file under paragraph (a) of this section;
- (d) Executive directors or heads of state agencies, by whatever name they are designated, who are paid in part or in whole, directly or indirectly, from funds appropriated or authorized to be expended by the Legislature, and the presidents and trustees of all state-supported colleges, universities and junior colleges;
- (e) Members of any state board, commission or agency, including the Mississippi Ethics Commission, charged with the administration or expenditure of public funds, with the exception of advisory boards or commissions; provided, however, in order to fulfill the legislative purposes of this chapter, the commission may require, upon a majority vote, the filing of a statement of economic interest by members of an advisory board or commission;
- (f) Executive directors, heads, or members of any board, committee, commission or council of any of the following entities, by whatever name designated:
  - (i) An economic development district established pursuant to Title 19, Chapter 5, Mississippi Code of 1972;
  - (ii) Any entity created pursuant to the Regional Economic Development Act, Title 57, Chapter 64, Mississippi Code of 1972;
  - (iii) Any county development commission established pursuant to Title 59, Chapter 9, Mississippi Code of 1972;
  - (iv) Any industrial council established pursuant to Title 57, Chapter 32, Mississippi Code of 1972; or

(v) An airport authority established pursuant to statute or other legislative act.  
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HISTORY: SOURCES: Laws, 1979, ch. 508, § 8; reenacted and amended, Laws, 1982, ch. 488, § 14; reenacted, Laws, 1986, ch. 348, § 14; reenacted, Laws, 1990, ch. 491; Laws, 1995, ch. 360, § 14; reenacted without change, Laws, 1998, ch. 350, § 14; Laws, 2008, ch. 562, § 7, eff August 5, 2008 (the date the United States Attorney General interposed no objection under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, to the amendment of this section.)

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### **§ 25-4-27. Contents of statement of economic interest**

Each person specified under Section 25-4-25 shall file a statement in accordance with the provisions of this chapter in the manner and format prescribed by the commission which shall be certified as to the accuracy and completeness of the information set forth to the best knowledge of the person submitting the statement. The commission shall develop a system of electronic filing for use by persons required to file a statement of economic interest. The commission shall implement the electronic filing system on or before January 1, 2010. Any person required to file with the commission shall file electronically on and after January 1, 2010. The statement shall include the following information for the preceding calendar year:

- (a) The name and mailing address of the filer;
- (b) The title, position and offices whereby the person is required to file;
- (c) All other occupations of the filer and his household members;
- (d) The names and addresses of all businesses in which the filer or a household member held a position, and the name of the position, if the person or a household member:
  - (i) Receives more than Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$ 2,500.00) per year in income from the business;
  - (ii) Owns ten percent (10%) or more of the fair market value in the business;
  - (iii) Owns an ownership interest in the business, the fair market value of which exceeds Five Thousand Dollars(\$ 5,000.00); or
  - (iv) Is an employee, director or officer of the business;
- (e) Any representation or intervention for compensation by a person specified under Section 25-4-25( a) and ( d) for any person or business before any authority of state or local government, excluding the courts; provided, however, that this provision shall not apply where the representation involves only uncontested or routine matters. The statement shall identify the person represented and the nature of the business involved; and
- (f) The filing party shall list all public bodies from which he or a household member received compensation in excess of One Thousand Dollars(\$ 1,000.00).

**HISTORY: SOURCES:** Laws, 1979, ch. 508, § 9; reenacted and amended, Laws, 1982, ch. 488, § 15; Laws, 1984, ch. 488, § 170; reenacted, Laws, 1986, ch. 348, § 15; reenacted, Laws, 1990, ch. 491; Laws, 1995, ch. 360, § 15; reenacted without change, Laws, 1998, ch. 350, § 15; Laws, 2008, ch. 562, § 8, eff August 5, 2008 (the date the United States Attorney General interposed no objection under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, to the amendment of this section.)

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## § 25-4-29. Filing dates for statements

(1) Required statements hereunder shall be filed as follows:

(a) Every incumbent public official required by paragraphs (a), (b), (d) and (e) of Section 25-4-25 to file a statement of economic interest shall file such statement with the commission on or before May 1 of each year that such official holds office, regardless of duration;

(b) Candidates for office required to file a statement hereunder shall file such statement within fifteen (15) days after the deadline for qualification for that public office;

(c) Persons who are required to file a statement because of appointment to fill a vacancy in an office or required to file under Section 25-4-25(d) and (e) shall file such statement within thirty (30) days of their appointment;

(d) No person by reason of successful candidacy or assuming additional offices shall be required to file more than one (1) statement of economic interest in any calendar year, except such official shall notify the commission as soon as practicable of additional offices not previously reported; and

(e) The commission may, on an individual case basis, provide for additional time to file a statement upon a showing that compliance with a filing date set out under paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d) above would work an unreasonable hardship.

(2) Any person who fails to file a statement of economic interest within thirty (30) days of the date the statement is due shall be deemed delinquent by the commission. The commission shall give written notice of the delinquency to the person by United States mail or by personal service of process. If within fifteen (15) days of receiving written notice of delinquency the delinquent filer has not filed the statement of economic interest, a fine of Fifty Dollars (\$ 50.00) per day, not

to exceed a total fine of One Thousand Dollars(\$ 1,000.00), shall be assessed against the delinquent filer for each day thereafter in which the statement of economic interest is not

properly filed. The commission shall enroll such assessment as a civil judgment with the circuit clerk in the delinquent filer's county of residence. The commission may enforce the judgment for the benefit of the State General Fund for the support of the Mississippi Adequate Education Program in the same manner as is prescribed for other civil judgments.

**HISTORY: SOURCES:** Laws, 1979, ch. 508, § 10; reenacted and amended, Laws, 1982, ch. 488, § 16; reenacted, Laws, 1986, ch. 348, § 16; reenacted, Laws, 1990, ch. 491; Laws, 1995, ch. 360, § 16; reenacted without change, Laws, 1998, ch. 350, § 16; Laws, 2008, ch. 562, § 10, eff August 5, 2008 (the date the United States Attorney General interposed no objection under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, to the amendment of this section); Laws, 2011, ch. 488, § 1, eff from and after July 1, 2011.

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**TITLE 25. PUBLIC OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES; PUBLIC RECORDS**  
**CHAPTER 4. ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT**  
**ARTICLE 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST; IMPROPER USE OF OFFICE**  
**Miss. Code Ann. § 25-4-25 (2011)**

**§ 25-4-101. Declaration of public policy**

The Legislature declares that elective and public office and employment is a public trust and any effort to realize personal gain through official conduct, other than as provided by law, or as a natural consequence of the employment or position, is a violation of that trust. Therefore, public servants shall endeavor to pursue a course of conduct which will not raise suspicion among the public that they are likely to be engaged in acts that are in violation of this trust and which will not reflect unfavorably upon the state and local governments.

HISTORY: SOURCES: Laws, 1983, ch. 469, § 1, effective from and after July 1, 1983.

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### § 25-4-103. Definitions

The following definitions apply in this article unless the context otherwise requires:

- (a) "Authority" means any component unit of a governmental entity.
- (b) "Benefit" means any gain or advantage to the beneficiary, including any gain or advantage to a third person pursuant to the desire or consent of the beneficiary.
- (c) "Business" means any corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, firm, enterprise, franchise, association, organization, holding company, self-employed individual, joint-stock company, receivership, trust or other legal entity or undertaking organized for economic gain, a nonprofit corporation or other such entity, association or organization receiving public funds.
- (d) "Business with which he is associated" means any business of which a public servant or his relative is an officer, director, owner, partner, employee or is a holder of more than ten percent (10%) of the fair market value or from which he or his relative derives more than Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$ 2,500.00) in annual income or over which such public servant or his relative exercises control.
- (e) "Compensation" means money or thing of value received, or to be received, from any person for services rendered.
- (f) "Contract" means:
  - (i) Any agreement to which the government is a party; or
  - (ii) Any agreement on behalf of the government which involves the payment of public funds.
- (g) "Government" means the state and all political entities thereof, both collectively and separately, including, but not limited to:
  - (i) Counties;
  - (ii) Municipalities;
  - (iii) All school districts;
  - (iv) All courts; and
  - (v) Any department, agency, board, commission, institution, instrumentality, or legislative or administrative body of the state, counties or municipalities created by statute, ordinance or executive order including all units that expend

public funds.

(h) "Governmental entity" means the state, a county, a municipality or any other separate political subdivision authorized by law to exercise a part of the sovereign power of the state.

(i) "Income" means money or thing of value received, or to be received, from any source derived, including, but not limited to, any salary, wage, advance, payment, dividend, interest, rent, forgiveness of debt, fee, royalty, commission or any combination thereof.

(j) "Intellectual property" means any formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique or process created primarily as a result of the research effort of an employee or employees of an institution of higher learning of the State of Mississippi.

(k) "Material financial interest" means a personal and pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, accruing to a public servant or spouse, either individually or in combination with each other. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the following shall not be deemed to be a material financial interest with respect to a business with which a public servant may be associated:

(i) Ownership of any interest of less than ten percent (10%) in a business where the aggregate annual net income to the public servant therefrom is less than One Thousand Dollars (\$ 1,000.00);

(ii) Ownership of any interest of less than two percent (2%) in a business where the aggregate annual net income to the public servant therefrom is less than Five Thousand Dollars (\$ 5,000.00);

(iii) The income as an employee of a relative if neither the public servant or relative is an officer, director or partner in the business and any ownership interest would not be deemed material pursuant to subparagraph (i) or (ii) herein; or

(iv) The income of the spouse of a public servant when such spouse is a contractor, subcontractor or vendor with the governmental entity that employs the public servant and the public servant exercises no control, direct or indirect, over the contract between the spouse and such governmental entity.

(l) "Pecuniary benefit" means benefit in the form of money, property, commercial interests or anything else the primary significance of which is economic gain. Expenses associated with social occasions afforded public servants shall not be deemed a pecuniary benefit.

(m) "Person" means any individual, firm, business, corporation, association, partnership, union or other legal entity, and where appropriate a governmental entity.

(n) "Property" means all real or personal property.

(o) "Public funds" means money belonging to the government.

(p) "Public servant" means:

(i) Any elected or appointed official of the government;

(ii) Any officer, director, commissioner, supervisor, chief, head, agent or employee of the government or any agency thereof, or of any public entity created by or under the laws of the State of Mississippi or created by an agency or governmental entity thereof, any of which is funded by public funds or which expends, authorizes or recommends the use of public funds; or

(iii) Any individual who receives a salary, per diem or expenses paid in whole or in part out of funds authorized to be expended by the government.

(q) "Relative" means:

(i) The spouse of the public servant;

(ii) The child of the public servant;

(iii) The parent of the public servant;

(iv) The sibling of the public servant; and

(v) The spouse of any of the relatives of the public servant specified in subparagraphs (ii) through (iv).

(r)"Securities" means stocks, bonds, notes, convertible debentures, warrants, evidences of debts or property or other such documents.

HISTORY: SOURCES: Laws, 1983, ch. 469, § 2 [See Editor's Note below]; Laws, 1991, ch. 572 § 1; Laws, 1992, ch. 530, § 9; Laws, 2008, ch. 562, § 12, eff August 5, 2008 (the date the United States Attorney General interposed no objection under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, to the amendment of this section.)

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**§ 25-4-105. Certain actions, activities and business relationships prohibited or authorized; contracts in violation of section voidable; penalties**

(1) No public servant shall use his official position to obtain, or attempt to obtain, pecuniary benefit for himself other than that compensation provided for by law, or to obtain, or attempt to obtain, pecuniary benefit for any relative or any business with which he is associated.

(2) No public servant shall be interested, directly or indirectly, during the term for which he shall have been chosen, or within one ( 1) year after the expiration of such term, in any contract with the state, or any district, county, city or town thereof, authorized by any law passed or order made by any board of which he may be or may have been a member.

(3) No public servant shall:

(a) Be a contractor, subcontractor or vendor with the governmental entity of which he is a member, officer, employee or agent, other than in his contract of employment, or have a material financial interest in any business which is a contractor, subcontractor or vendor with the governmental entity of which he is a member, officer, employee or agent

(b) Be a purchaser, direct or indirect, at any sale made by him in his official capacity or by the governmental entity of which he is an officer or employee, except in respect of the sale of goods or services when provided as public utilities or offered to the general public on a uniform price schedule.

(c) Be a purchaser, direct or indirect, of any claim, certificate, warrant or other security issued by or to be paid out of the treasury of the governmental entity of which he is an officer or employee.

(d) Perform any service for any compensation during his term of office or employment by which he attempts to influence a decision of the authority of the governmental entity of which he is a member.

(e) Perform any service for any compensation for any person or business after termination of his office or employment in relation to any case, decision, proceeding or application with respect to which he was directly concerned or in which he personally participated during the period of his service or employment.

(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (3) of this section, a public servant or his relative:

(a) May be an officer or stockholder of banks or savings and loan associations or other such financial institutions bidding for bonds, notes or other evidences of debt or for the privilege of keeping as depositories the public funds of a governmental entity thereof or the editor or employee of any newspaper in which legal notices are required to be published in respect to the publication of said

legal notices.

(b) May be a contractor or vendor with any authority of the governmental entity other than the authority of the governmental entity of which he is a member, officer, employee or agent or have a material financial interest in a business which is a contractor or vendor with any authority of the governmental entity other than the authority of the governmental entity of which he is a member, officer, employee or agent where such contract is let to the lowest and best bidder after competitive bidding and three (3) or more legitimate bids are received or where the goods, services or property involved are reasonably available from two (2) or fewer commercial sources, provided such transactions comply with the public purchases laws.

(c) May be a subcontractor with any authority of the governmental entity other than the authority of the governmental entity of which he is a member, officer, employee or agent or have a material financial interest in a business which is a subcontractor with any authority of the governmental entity other than the authority of the governmental entity of which he is a member, officer, employee or agent where the primary contract is let to the lowest and best bidder after competitive bidding or where such goods or services involved are reasonably available from two (2) or fewer commercial sources, provided such transactions comply with the public purchases laws.

(d) May be a contractor, subcontractor or vendor with any authority of the governmental entity of which he is a member, officer, employee or agent or have a material financial interest in a business which is a contractor, subcontractor or vendor with any authority of the governmental entity of which he is a member, officer, employee or agent: (i) where such goods or services involved are reasonably available from two (2) or fewer commercial sources, provided such transactions comply with the public purchases laws; or (ii) where the contractual relationship involves the further research, development, testing, promotion or merchandising of an intellectual property created by the public servant.

(e) May purchase securities issued by the governmental entity of which he is an officer or employee if such securities are offered to the general public and are purchased at the same price as such securities are offered to the general public.

(f) May have an interest less than a material financial interest in a business which is a contractor, subcontractor or vendor with any governmental entity.

(g) May contract with the Mississippi Veteran's Home Purchase Board, Mississippi Housing Finance Corporation, or any other state loan program, for the purpose of securing a loan; however, public servants shall not receive favored treatment.

(h) May be employed by or receive compensation from an authority of the governmental entity other than the authority of the governmental entity of which

the public servant is an officer or employee.

(i) If a member of the Legislature or other public servant employed on less than a full-time basis, may represent a person or organization for compensation before an authority of the governmental entity other than an authority of the governmental entity of which he is an officer or employee.

(j) If a constable, may be employed and receive compensation as a deputy sheriff or other employee of the county for which he serves as constable.

(5) No person may intentionally use or disclose information gained in the course of or by reason of his official position or employment as a public servant in any way that could result in pecuniary benefit for himself, any relative, or any other person, if the information has not been communicated to the public or is not public information.

(6) Any contract made in violation of this section may be declared void by the governing body of the contracting or selling authority of the governmental subdivision or a court of competent jurisdiction and the contractor or subcontractor shall retain or receive only the reasonable value, with no increment for profit or commission, of the property or the services furnished prior to the date of receiving notice that the contract has been voided.

(7) Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be punished as provided for **in** Sections 25-4-109 and 25-4-111.

HISTORY: SOURCES: Laws, 1983, ch. 469, § 3; Laws, 1988, ch. 546, § 4; Laws, 1992, ch. 530, § 10; Laws, 1994, ch. 586, § 1; Laws, 1998, ch. 490, § 1; Laws, 2000, ch. 578, § 2; Laws, 2008, ch. 562, § 13, eff August 5, 2008 (the date the United States Attorney General interposed no objection under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, to the amendment of this section.)

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