

Changes to California Lobbying and Campaign Reporting

September 2012

Two changes were made to California lobbying and campaign reporting rules in July.

First, California Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill 2452. The bill mandates that localities provide access to electronic filing systems free of charge, and prohibits localities that mandate electronic filing from requiring filers to submit paper filings in addition to electronic filings. The bill also requires local authorities with mandatory electronic filing of campaign reports to provide electronic filing systems that meet certain security and standardization requirements. Assembly Bill 2452 takes effect on January 1, 2013.

Second, the California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) recently changed its regulation on lobbyist and lobbying firm reporting requirements for "drop-in" events. Under the revised regulation, a filer does not need to disclose the value of food or drink when an official drops in at an event for a short period of time and only consumes a minimal amount of appetizers or beverages without staying for a meal or entertainment. The regulation does not provide additional guidance on what constitutes "minimal" appetizers or beverages. This exception only applies if the official notifies the filer in writing that he or she did not stay for any meal or entertainment and only consumed minimal appetizers and beverages. If any specific item other than food is provided to the official or a guest accompanying the official, the value of the item must be reported. This change was made to comport with modifications to California's gift rules that were made in December 2011.

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