

# Changes in the States: New Jersey State Legislature Amends Gift Rules

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New Jersey's legislature recently amended the state's gift rules. The following five changes, among other provisions, apply to lobbyists and, more generally, to state employees. The new rules are effective April 13, 2004.

First, covered executive and legislative branch officials may not accept a gift, honorarium or anything of value from a lobbyist or legislative agent in excess of \$250 in the aggregate for a calendar year. This prohibition also applies to the receipt of gifts by the immediate family of covered officials. The restriction does not apply if the gift is received in the course of non-state employment or if full reimbursement is made within 90 days.

Second, no person may "confer any benefit, whether the benefit inures to a public servant or another person, to influence a public servant in the performance of any official duty or to commit a violation of an official duty."

Third, high-level executive branch officials may not receive honoraria from any person.

Fourth, state employees and legislative and executive officials may not receive honoraria or gifts for any matter related to their official duties.

Exceptions to the above-three prohibitions include the following:

- In-state travel;
- Out-of-state travel up to \$500 per trip;

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- Out-of-state travel paid by a non-profit organization of which the covered official is an active member and
- Out-of-state travel provided by a non-profit organization that does not contract with the state to provide goods, materials, equipment or services.

Finally, campaign contributions may not be given in lieu of gifts or honoraria prohibited above.