

Ohio's Taft Failed to Report Gifts, Second Governor Found Guilty

September 2005

Governor Bob Taft of Ohio pled no contest to receiving 52 gifts worth more than \$6,000 in the past four years. He was found guilty of four misdemeanor violations by the state court and fined \$4,000. Most of the gifts were in the form of golf and expensive meals. Ohio requires executive branch officials to report all gifts of more than \$75, which Taft failed to do. Two former staff members were also found to have violated the same gift reporting statute and each paid a \$1,000 fine. His former chief of staff had failed to disclose vacation stays at the Florida home of a Toledo businessman.

The Ohio gift violations come less than a year after Connecticut Governor John Rowland resigned and subsequently pled guilty to accepting more than \$107,000 in personal gifts from a government contractor. Rowland is currently in federal prison serving a sentence of one year and a day. Recent press reports indicate that Connecticut state authorities are separately investigating whether Rowland violated a state ethics law that prohibits former officials from lobbying for a year. Rowland is alleged to have lobbied between the time he resigned and when he started his prison term.

All states and most municipalities have laws that limit the size of gifts—particularly from lobbyists to government officials—and/or require public disclosure of gifts. State laws also regulate "revolving door" employment of former government officials. View a complete list of links to state websites with ethics and gift law information.

Authors

D. Mark Renaud
Partner
202.719.7405
mrenaud@wiley.law