

# Florida Amends Gifts and Lobbying Laws

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On December 20, 2005, Governor Jeb Bush of Florida signed a new law that amends the state's lobbying and ethics laws. Effective January 1, 2006, the new law does two things.

First, it appears to prohibit all gifts from lobbyists and lobbyist employers to legislators, legislative staff and many individuals in the state's executive branch. Second, the new law changes the lobbying code's reporting requirements to focus on the reporting of compensation received, as opposed to expenditures made (given that most expenditures are now banned). The first reports under the new scheme are not due until May 15, 2006, but reporting will now be quarterly.

The new statute also makes several other provisions effective in 2007. At that time, electronic filing will be required for the compensation reports. Moreover, starting in 2007 the new law permits random audits of 3% of all legislative lobbyists and 3% of all executive branch lobbyists. There appears to be some confusion in Florida as to the scope of the new law, but we expect the issues to be fleshed out over the next few months.

## Information on State Governments

Access Jan Baran's FindLaw page, which includes links to information on campaign finance, lobbying and ethics laws for all 50 states and DC.

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