



Ohio Revised Code

Section 101.34 Joint legislative ethics committee - fund.

Effective: October 3, 2023

Legislation: House Bill 33

(A) There is hereby created a joint legislative ethics committee to serve the general assembly. The committee shall be composed of twelve members, six each from the two major political parties, and each member shall serve on the committee during the member's term as a member of that general assembly. Six members of the committee shall be members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, not more than three from the same political party, and six members of the committee shall be members of the senate appointed by the president of the senate, not more than three from the same political party. A vacancy in the committee shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as an original appointment. The members of the committee shall be appointed within forty-five days after the first day of the first regular session of each general assembly and the committee shall meet and proceed to recommend an ethics code not later than sixty days after the first day of the first regular session of each general assembly.

In the first regular session of each general assembly, the speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint the chairperson of the committee from among the house members of the committee, and the president of the senate shall appoint the vice-chairperson of the committee from among the senate members of the committee. In the second regular session of each general assembly, the president of the senate shall appoint the chairperson of the committee from among the senate members of the committee, and the speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint the vice-chairperson of the committee from among the house members of the committee. The chairperson, vice-chairperson, and members of the committee shall serve until their respective successors are appointed or until they are no longer members of the general assembly.

The committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson or upon the written request of seven members of the committee.

(B) The joint legislative ethics committee:

(1) Shall recommend a code of ethics that is consistent with law to govern all members and



employees of each house of the general assembly and all candidates for the office of member of each house;

(2) May receive and hear any complaint that alleges a breach of any privilege of either house, or misconduct of any member, employee, or candidate, or any violation of the appropriate code of ethics;

(3) May obtain information with respect to any complaint filed pursuant to this section and to that end may enforce the attendance and testimony of witnesses, and the production of books and papers;

(4) May recommend whatever sanction is appropriate with respect to a particular member, employee, or candidate as will best maintain in the minds of the public a good opinion of the conduct and character of members and employees of the general assembly;

(5) May recommend legislation to the general assembly relating to the conduct and ethics of members and employees of and candidates for the general assembly;

(6) Shall employ an executive director for the committee and may employ other staff as the committee determines necessary to assist it in exercising its powers and duties. The executive director and staff of the committee shall be known as the office of legislative inspector general. At least one member of the staff of the committee shall be an attorney at law licensed to practice law in this state. The appointment and removal of the executive director shall require the approval of at least eight members of the committee.

(7) May employ a special counsel to assist the committee in exercising its powers and duties. The appointment and removal of a special counsel shall require the approval of at least eight members of the committee.

(8) Shall act as an advisory body to the general assembly and to individual members, candidates, and employees on questions relating to ethics, possible conflicts of interest, and financial disclosure;

(9) Shall provide for the proper forms on which a statement required pursuant to section 102.02 or 102.021 of the Revised Code shall be filed and instructions as to the filing of the statement;



(10) May exercise the powers and duties prescribed under sections 101.70 to 101.79, sections 101.90 to 101.98, Chapter 102., and sections 121.60 to 121.69 of the Revised Code;

(11) May adopt, in accordance with section 111.15 of the Revised Code, any rules that are necessary to implement and clarify Chapter 102. and sections 2921.42 and 2921.43 of the Revised Code.

(C) There is hereby created in the state treasury the joint legislative ethics committee fund. All money collected from registration fees and late filing fees prescribed under sections 101.72, 101.92, and 121.62 of the Revised Code shall be deposited into the state treasury to the credit of the fund. Money credited to the fund and any interest and earnings from the fund shall be used solely for the operation of the joint legislative ethics committee and the office of legislative inspector general and for the purchase of data storage and computerization facilities for the statements filed with the committee under sections 101.73, 101.74, 101.93, 101.94, 121.63, and 121.64 of the Revised Code.

(D) The chairperson of the joint legislative ethics committee shall issue a written report, not later than the thirty-first day of January of each year, to the speaker and minority leader of the house of representatives and to the president and minority leader of the senate that lists the number of committee meetings and investigations the committee conducted during the immediately preceding calendar year and the number of advisory opinions it issued during the immediately preceding calendar year.

(E) Any investigative report that contains facts and findings regarding a complaint filed with the joint legislative ethics committee and that is prepared by the staff of the committee or a special counsel to the committee shall become a public record upon its acceptance by a vote of the majority of the members of the committee, except for any names of specific individuals and entities contained in the report. If the committee recommends disciplinary action or reports its findings to the appropriate prosecuting authority for proceedings in prosecution of the violations alleged in the complaint, the investigatory report regarding the complaint shall become a public record in its entirety.

(F)(1) Any file obtained by or in the possession of the former house ethics committee or former senate ethics committee shall become the property of the joint legislative ethics committee. Any such



file is confidential if either of the following applies:

(a) It is confidential under section 102.06 of the Revised Code or the legislative code of ethics.

(b) If the file was obtained from the former house ethics committee or from the former senate ethics committee, it was confidential under any statute or any provision of a code of ethics that governed the file.

(2) As used in this division, "file" includes, but is not limited to, evidence, documentation, or any other tangible thing.

(G) There is hereby created in the state treasury the joint legislative ethics committee investigative and financial disclosure fund. Investment earnings of the fund shall be credited to the fund. All moneys credited to the fund shall be used solely for expenses related to the investigative and financial disclosure functions of the committee.