

*Annual Report
to the
Florida Legislature
For Calendar Year 2022*



*By the
State of Florida
Commission on Ethics*

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Message from the Chair

Nearly fifty years ago, the Florida Legislature realized the need to uphold ethics and integrity in Florida's government at all levels. The result was the creation of the Florida Commission on Ethics in 1974. I was privileged to be the first person appointed to the commission.

We had no staff and not even an office, but the nine of us, all new to the process began the task of writing rules and drafting forms, many of which we still use today. Over the nearly half century of the commission's existence, its role and scope has been expanded by subsequent actions of the legislature. Our staff component has grown along with the ability to serve both governments and citizens around the state.

The most significant recent development has been the implementation of e-filing. In 2022, prior to the system pause in June, over 800 Form 6 disclosures were filed electronically. A total of 38,257 persons filed various forms of financial disclosure at the state and local level during 2022. The timeliness of those disclosures has to be catalogued by commission staff. The e-filing system relaunched for Form 6 filers in 2023 and once fully implemented will provide for ease of filing and more accurate recording of information.

During calendar year 2022, the Commission took 232 actions on complaints during its eight regularly scheduled meetings, including seventy-three probable cause hearings, final action on fourteen settlement agreements, and eight recommended orders.

The total staff component of the Commission is twenty-three. In addition to reviewing and investigating complaints, the Commission's excellent legal staff reviews and drafts numerous advisory opinions in response to requests from eligible persons on how to proceed in various complex situations under the ethics laws. Opinions not only guide those requesting, but also the commission has built a library of formal opinions for others to follow. The Commission also administers the Executive Branch Lobbyist Registration laws.

The origin of the commission was to not only reprimand and impose sanctions on those who have done wrong, but to create an overall awareness that ethics and

integrity should be a standard for all serving in various governmental positions in Florida.

One of the original purposes for forming the commission was to make public at certain position levels the financial assets and liabilities of those serving in public office. A person's financial condition can influence their public action and the public has a right to know.

The Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees, adopted by the Legislature contains standards of ethical conduct and disclosures applicable to public officers, employees, candidates, lobbyists, and others in state and local government.

It is essential to the proper conduct and operation of government that public officials be independent and impartial and that public office not be used for private gain other than the remuneration provided by law. The public interest, therefore, requires that the law protect against any conflict of interest and establish standards for the conduct of elected officials and government employees in situations where conflicts may exist. The commission is charged with upholding those standards at all levels of government in the state.

Having been appointed two more times to the commission and now as the outgoing chairman, it has been a great honor to serve both the Commission and the State. We currently have one the best commissions we have ever had, men and women committed to ethics and integrity and the standards and laws charged to the Commission.

It is the intent of the act creating the commission to implement the objectives of protecting the integrity of government and of facilitating the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel by prescribing restrictions against conflicts of interest without creating unnecessary barriers to public service.

The Florida Commission on Ethics does its assigned tasks well and is a bright light for ethics and integrity in Florida.

Sincerely,

John Grant
Chair, Florida Commission on Ethics

2022 Commission Members

JOHN GRANT, *Chair*

Tampa - Attorney (R)
Appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis

GLENTON "GLEN" GILZEAN, JR., *Vice Chair*

Orlando - Non-profit Executive (R)
Appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis

MICHELLE ANCHORS

Fort Walton Beach - Attorney (D)
Appointed by Senate President Bill Galvano

WILLIAM P. CERVONE

Gainesville - Former State Attorney (R)
Appointed by House Speaker Chris Sprowls

DON GAETZ

Niceville - Retired Health Care Executive (R)
Appointed by Senate President Wilton Simpson

WILLIAM "WILLIE" N. MEGGS

Tallahassee - Former State Attorney (D)
Appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis

ED H. MOORE

Tallahassee - Association Executive (R)
Appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis


WENGAY M. NEWTON, SR.

St. Petersburg -
Former Member of the Florida House of Representatives (D)
Appointed by House Speaker Chris Sprowls

JIM WALDMAN

Fort Lauderdale - Attorney (D)
Appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis

Introduction & History

ection 112.322(8), Florida Statutes, requires the Florida Commission on Ethics to "submit to the Legislature from time to time a report of its work and recommendations for legislation deemed necessary to improve the code of ethics and its enforcement." This report has been provided to the Legislature on an annual basis since 1974. The publication of this document is intended to inform the Legislature and the public of the Commission's work during the calendar year 2022.

Florida has been a leader among the states in establishing ethics standards for public officials and recognizing the right of her people to protect the public trust against abuse. In 1967, the Legislature enacted "a code of ethics setting forth standards of conduct to be observed by state officers and employees in the performance of their official duties." Chapter 67-469, Laws of Florida, declared it to be the policy of the Legislature that no state officer or employee, or member or employee of the Legislature, should have any direct or indirect business or professional interest that would "conflict with the proper discharge of his duties in the public interest." The code was amended to be applicable to officers and employees of political subdivisions of the state in 1969 (Chapter 69-335, Laws of Florida). Five years later, the Florida Commission on Ethics was statutorily created by Chapter 74-176, Laws of Florida (now Part III, Chapter 112, Florida Statutes), to "serve as guardian of the standards of conduct for the officers and employees of the state, and of a county, city, or other political subdivision of the state...."

In late 1975 and 1976, Governor Reubin Askew led an initiative petition drive to amend the Constitution to provide more stringent requirements relating to ethics in government and to require certain public officials and candidates to file full and public disclosure of their financial interests and their campaign finances. The voters in Florida overwhelmingly approved this measure in the 1976 General Election, and the "Sunshine Amendment," Article II, Section 8, Florida Constitution, became part of the Constitution on January 4, 1977. The Amendment declares: "A public office is a public trust. The people shall have the right to secure and sustain that trust against abuse." The

Constitution provides for investigations of complaints concerning breaches of the public trust and provides that the Florida Commission on Ethics be the independent commission to conduct these investigations.

The "Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees" adopted by the Legislature is found in Chapter 112 (Part III) of the Florida Statutes. Foremost among the goals of the Code is to promote the public interest and maintain the respect of the people in their government. The Code is intended to ensure that public officials conduct themselves independently and impartially, not using their offices for private gain other than compensation provided by law. While seeking to protect the integrity of government, the Code also seeks to avoid the creation of unnecessary barriers to public service. Criminal penalties which initially applied to violations of the Code were eliminated in 1974 in favor of administrative enforcement.

Duties statutorily assigned to the Commission on Ethics include investigating sworn complaints alleging violations of the ethics laws, making penalty recommendations for violations, maintaining a financial disclosure notification system totaling 38,257 reporting officials and employees this past year, and issuing advisory opinions regarding Part III of Chapter 112, Florida Statutes, and Article II, Section 8, Florida Constitution. The Commission's jurisdiction was expanded with the adoption of Amendment 12 by Florida voters in 2018. The Constitutional provisions regarding abuse of office for a disproportional benefit were implemented December 31, 2020, and the implementation of the lobbying and post-officeholding provisions took effect December 31, 2022. The Commission also is charged with administering the Executive Branch Lobbyist Registration System and the Executive Branch Lobby Registration Trust Fund. Section 112.3215, Florida Statutes, provides registration requirements for persons wishing to lobby the Executive Office of the Governor, Governor and Cabinet and departments, Commissions, and agencies of the executive branch. Additionally, Section 112.32155, Florida Statutes, directs the Commission to provide an electronic filing system for lobbying firm's to submit quarterly compensation reports. This information is accessible by visiting the Florida Reporting system home page at www.floridalobbyist.gov.

Organization

The Commission on Ethics is an appointive body consisting of nine members, none of whom may hold any public employment or be employed to lobby state or local government. Five of the members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. No more than three of the Governor's appointees may be of the same political party, and one must be a former city or county official. The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate each make two appointments to the Commission. The two appointments must be persons with different political party affiliations. The appointees of the President and Speaker are not subject to Senate confirmation. Any member of the Commission may be removed for cause by a majority vote of the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court.

Members of the Commission on Ethics serve two-year terms and may not serve more than two full terms in succession; however, members whose terms have expired continue to serve until they are replaced. A chair and vice-chair are selected by the members for one-year terms. Members of the Commission do not receive a salary but do receive reimbursement for travel and per diem expenses while on official Commission business.

Ethics Commission Staff

Legal, investigative, and administrative functions of the Commission are performed by staff, consisting of 23 full-time equivalent positions.

Kerrie J. Stillman, Executive Director

Steven Zuilkowski, Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel

Legal Section

Under the supervision of the Deputy Executive Director and the General Counsel, the legal section drafts opinions, orders, rules, and proposed legislation for consideration by the Commission, teaches, and responds to inquires about the ethics laws. The legal staff also represents the Commission in litigation.

Commission staff does not prosecute complaints. Those services are provided by Assistant Attorneys General Elizabeth Miller and Melody Hadley, who have been assigned by the Attorney General to act as full-time Advocates for the Commission.

Legal Staff

Grayden Schafer, Assistant General Counsel

Katharine Heyward, Attorney

Joseph Burns, Attorney

Investigative Section

The investigative staff, supervised by the Executive Director, conducts investigations of alleged violations of the ethics laws and writes narrative investigative reports.

Investigative Staff

A. Keith Powell, Investigations Manager

Ronald D. Moalli, Senior Investigator

Charlie Shotwell, Investigator

Tracey Maleszewski, Investigator

Ana Sanchez, Investigator

Brian Durham, Investigator

John Cizmada, Investigator

Marian Lambeth, Investigator

Complaints

Under the supervision of the Executive Director, the Complaint Coordinator serves as the liaison between the Commission and the Complainant and Respondent and, as the official Clerk of the Commission, is responsible for maintaining the complaint tracking system and files.

Millie Fulford, Complaint Coordinator

Financial Disclosure Section

The Program Administrator, under the supervision of the Executive Director, responds to questions about the disclosure laws, compiles a list of the persons statewide who are required to file either Form 1 or Form 6 financial disclosure, tracks late filers and automatic fines, and interacts with agency Financial Disclosure coordinators. Some 38,257 reporting officials and employees were notified of their filing requirements in 2022 by the Commission and by the Supervisors of Elections.

Financial Disclosure Staff

Kimberly Holmes, Program Administrator

Emily Prine, Program Specialist

Keyana Green, Executive Secretary

Public Information & Administrative Section

Under the supervision of the Executive Director, the Chief Administrator oversees office technology, responds to general inquiries about the ethics laws, provides information regarding Commission practices and procedures to the press and the public, and oversees the administrative and clerical support staff who provide support services to the Commissioners and staff.

Administrative and Clerical Staff

Lynn Blais, Chief Administrator

Diana Westberry, Office Manager

Kathy Steverson, Assistant to the Executive Director

Vacant, Executive Secretary

Alex Rudd, Clerk (half-time)

Rachel Campbell, Clerk (half-time)

Executive Branch Lobbyist Registration

The Commission is charged with administering the Executive Branch Lobby Registration Act and oversees the registration of executive branch lobbyist and compensation report filings of executive branch lobbying firms.

Lobbyist Registration Staff

Karen Murphy-Bunton, Registrar

Fiscal Report

The following chart reflects revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balances for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022.

BUDGET AND ACTUAL - GENERAL REVENUE FUNDS For The Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2022 (Amounts in dollars)

	Ethics General Revenue		Variance- Favorable (Unfavorable)
	Budget	Actual	
Revenues:			
Released General Revenue Appropriations	\$2,789,233	\$2,789,233	\$0
Fines*	0	23,590	\$23,590
Miscellaneous Receipts	0	0	\$0
Total Revenues	2,789,233	2,812,823	23,590
Expenditures:			
Salaries and Related Benefits	1,893,549	1,690,873	202,676
Other Personal Services	470,480	415,879	54,601
Expenses	262,140	209,052	53,088
Operating Capital Outlay	0	0	0
Ethics Commission Lump Sum	0	0	0
Transfers to Administrative Hearings	59,834	59,834	0
Risk management insurance	3,230	3,230	0
Legislative Carryforward **	2,616,065	35,255	2,580,810
Nonoperating***	100,000	0	100,000
Total Expenditures	5,405,298	2,414,123	2,991,175
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues and Other Financing Sources Over Expenditures	(2,616,065)	398,700	\$3,014,765
Budgetary Fund Balance, June 30, 2022		398,700	
Adjustment for Fines*		(23,590)	
Adjustment for Nonoperating***		(100,000)	
Adjustments for Carryforward Expenditures**			
Adjusted Budgetary Fund Balance, June 30, 2022		\$275,110	

EXECUTIVE BRANCH LOBBYIST REGISTRATION SUMMARY

FEES REVENUES:	\$ 312,772
FINES:	\$ 4,700

* Fines are recorded as Collection to General Revenue. They are not a revenue in the state's accounting system and are not an available resource to the fund.

** Legislative Carryforward is prior years' unspent budget carried forward to the current year. It is treated as a current appropriation.

*** Nonoperating Budget is budget set up to refund fines and is not an available resource to the fund.

Operations

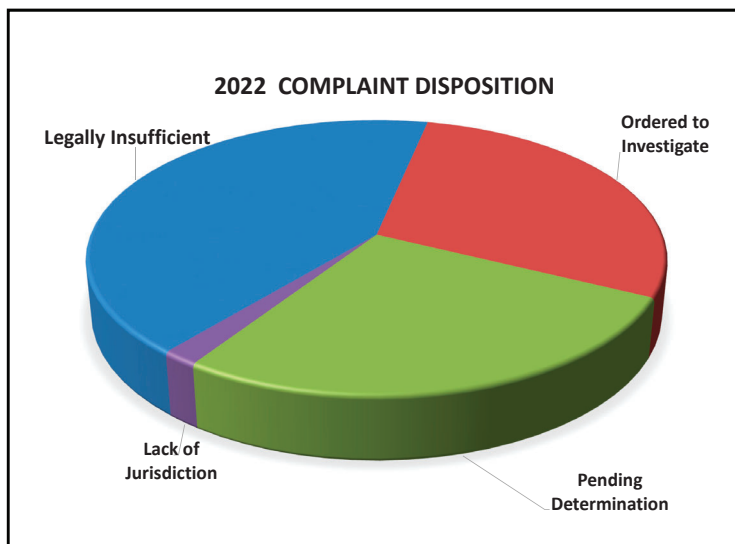
The major operational functions of the Commission on Ethics are the investigation of complaints and referrals,* management of the Executive Branch Lobbyist Registration Act, issuance of advisory opinions, provision of public information and education, and financial disclosure administration. This section offers a profile of the Commission's workload

Complaints

Total number of complaints and referrals filed in 2022223

POSITION	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
State Elected	12	5.4%
State Employee	20	9.0%
District Elected	24	10.8%
District Appointed	2	0.9%
District Employee	10	4.5%
County Elected	36	16.1%
County Appointed	2	0.9%
County Employee	24	10.8%
Municipal Elected	53	23.8%
Municipal Appointed	10	4.5%
Municipal Employee	23	10.3%
Candidate	4	1.8%
Lobbyist	3	1.3%
TOTAL	223	100.0%

Of the 223 complaints and referrals received in 2022, 95 were dismissed for lack of legal sufficiency; 2 were dismissed because of lack of jurisdiction; 65 were ordered to be investigated; and 61 were pending a legal sufficiency determination, as of December 31.

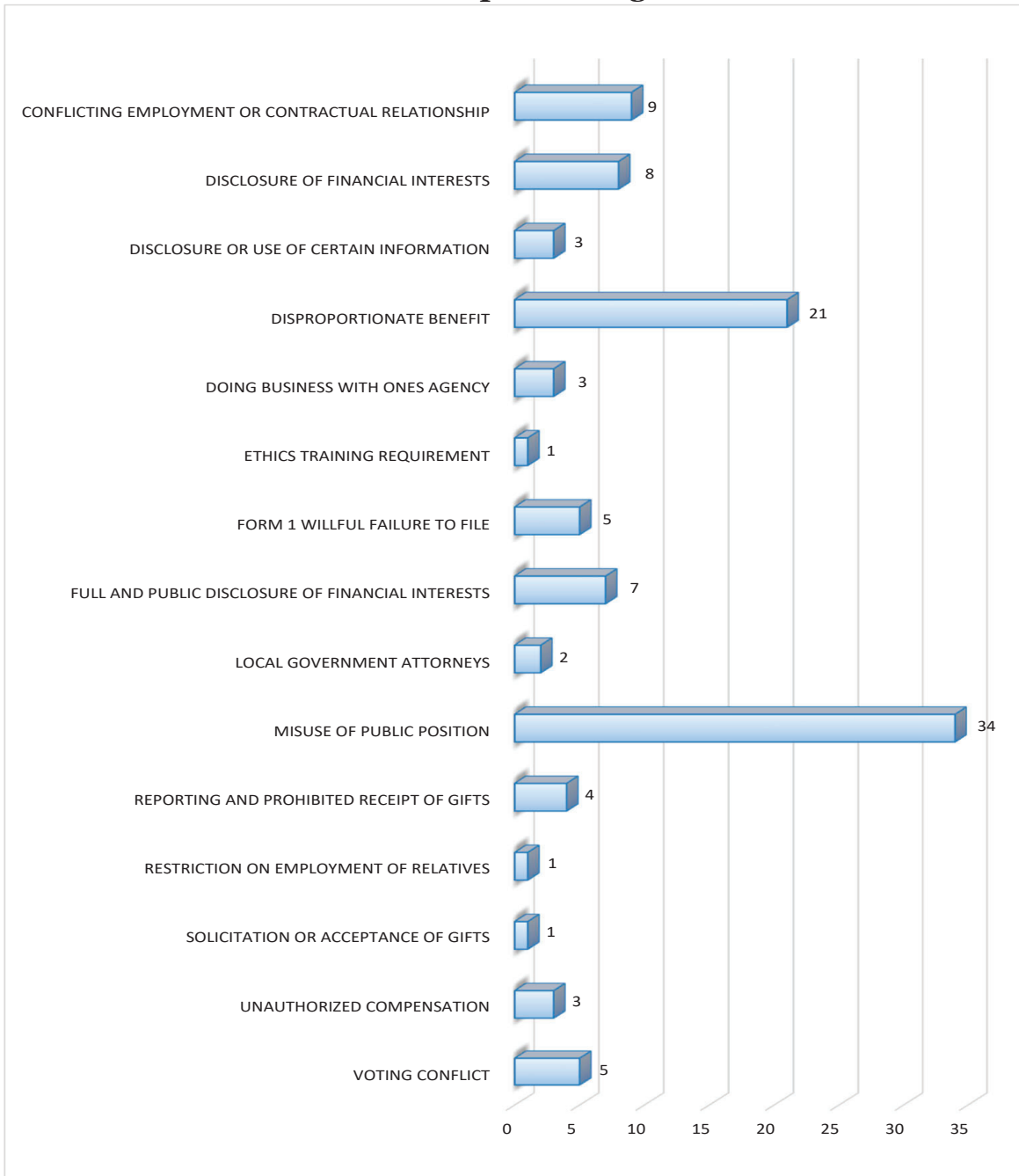


* The Commission may accept referrals from the Governor, State Attorneys, U.S. Attorneys, and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

Allegations

Of the 223 complaints and referrals received in 2022, 65 had been ordered to be investigated as of December 31, 2022. A breakdown of the allegations made in complaints found sufficient for investigation is illustrated below. Most complaints contained allegations concerning more than one area of law.

2022 Complaint Allegations

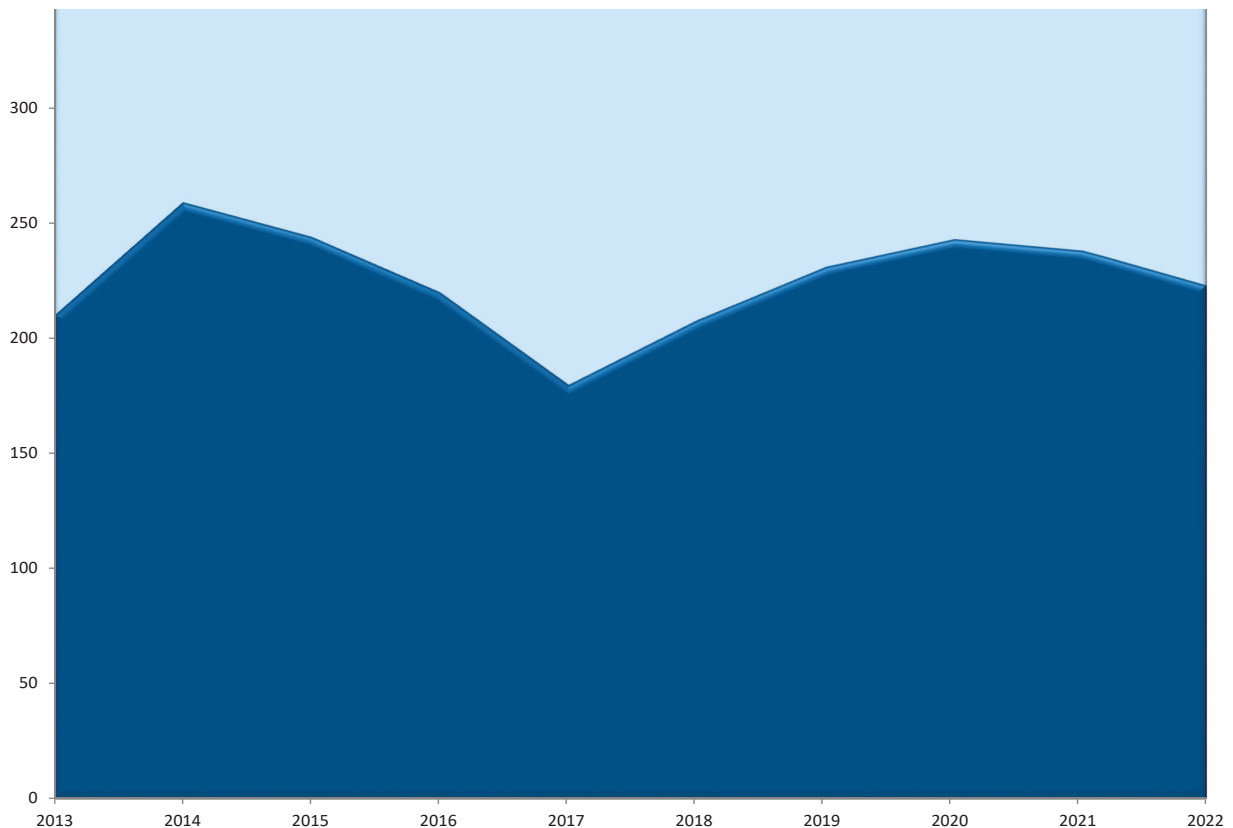


Ten Year History of Complaints

Over the past 10 years, the Commission's complaint numbers have remained relatively steady. However, it is anticipated that with the full implementation of Amendment 12, the Commission will see an increase in the number of complaints filed in the future, as the impact of the Amendment is fully realized.

2022.....	223
2021	238
2020.....	243
2019	231
2018	211
2017	180
2016.....	220
2015	244
2014	259
2013	210

Complaint History



Actions Taken on Complaints in 2022

The Commission took action during its regularly-scheduled meetings on complaints, referrals, statutorily-mandated investigations concerning lobbyist compensation reports, determination as to whether late-filed disclosure was "willful," and petitions for costs and attorney fees. The following is a summary of action taken in 2022, across all active complaints.

Complaints & Mandatory Willfulness Investigations.....	227
Dismissed for lack of legal sufficiency	126
Dismissed for lack of jurisdiction	6
Probable cause hearings held	73
No probable cause - dismissed.....	44
Probable cause	23
Probable cause - no further action	5
Advocate's Motion to Dismiss	1
Stipulations	14
Violation	12
Rejected	2
Public hearings at the Division of Administrative Hearings.....	8
Violation	7
No Violation	1
Costs and attorney's fees petitions	1
Parties Settled - dismissed.....	0
Insufficient petition - dismissed	1
Statutorily-Required Investigation of Lobbying Firm Compensation Audits	4
Probable Cause.....	2
No probable cause.....	2

TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON COMPLAINTS 232

* Pursuant to Section 112.324(12), F.S. ("Rudd Amendment") the Commission may dismiss any complaint or referral at any stage of disposition should it determine that the public interest would not be served by proceeding further.

Executive Branch Lobbyist Registration

A person who is a "lobbyist" as defined in Section 112.3215(1)(h), F.S., may not lobby an Executive branch agency until he or she has registered as a lobbyist with the Commission. Executive branch lobbyist registration may be made by electronic means via the Lobbyist Registration and Compensation Reporting system located at www.floridalobbyist.gov. Lobbyist registrants are required to pay an annual registration fee of \$25 for each principal represented, which is deposited into the Executive Branch Lobby Registration Trust Fund. The fee is payable on a calendar year basis and there is no charge if a lobbyist amends his or her registration to lobby additional agencies on behalf of the same principal.

Executive branch lobbying firms are required to electronically file quarterly compensation reports disclosing compensation received from their principals. Penalties for failure to file these quarterly reports by the deadline are automatic and accrue at \$50 for each day late, with a maximum penalty of \$5,000.

Each lobbying firm is entitled to receive a one-time fine waiver if the report is filed within 30 days after the firm is notified of the failure to file. Otherwise, the lobbying firm is assessed a fine at the time the delinquent report is filed. If an appeal is filed within 30 days after the lobbying firm is noticed of the assessed fine, the Commission has the authority to waive the assessed fines in whole or in part for good cause, based on "unusual circumstances."

2022 Summary of Activity

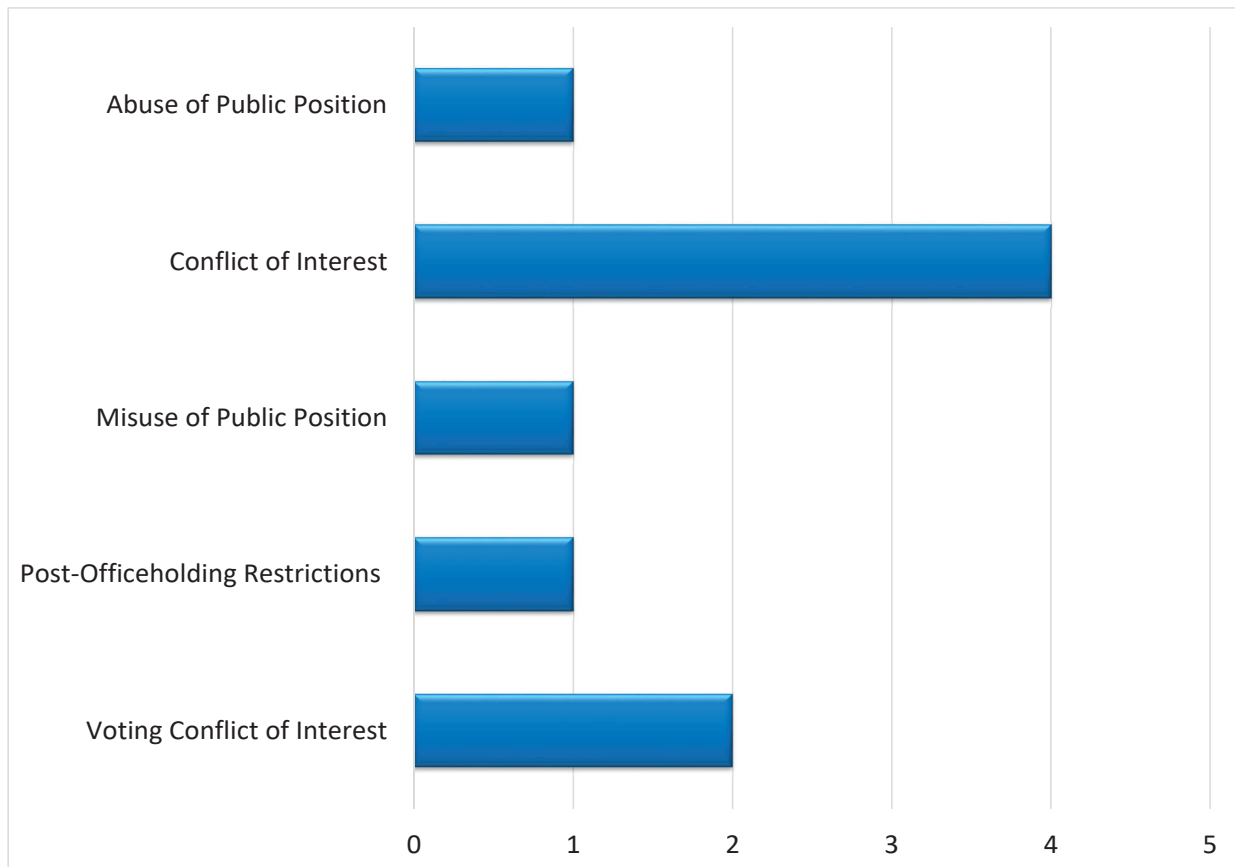
Total number of registered executive branch lobbyists	1,481
Total number of executive branch lobbying firms	317
Total number of principals represented by the lobbyists	12,312
Percent <i>increase</i> in number of principals from 2021 to 2022	1.39%
Total number of firms delinquent in filing their compensation reports	
October - December 2021	19
<i>(Filing deadline for fourth quarter 2021 was February 14, 2022)</i>	
January - March 2022	20
April - June 2022	10
July - September 2022.....	13
Total number of firms assessed a fine in 2022	
Fourth quarter 2021	13
<i>(Filing deadline for fourth quarter 2021 was February 14, 2022)</i>	
First quarter 2022.....	12
Second quarter 2022	8
Third quarter 2022	11
Number of appeals considered by the Commission in 2022.....	0

Advisory Opinions

The Commission issues advisory opinions to public officers, candidates, and public employees who are in doubt about the applicability of the standards of conduct or disclosure laws to themselves or to anyone they have the power to hire or terminate. During 2021, the Commission on Ethics issued five advisory opinions, bringing the total issued since 1974 to 2,694.

Three of the opinions rendered in 2022 were in response to requests by local officers, employees, or local government attorneys, and another two opinions were issued regarding state level officers or employees.

The bar graph illustrates the number of instances in which a provision of the ethics code was addressed in a formal opinion of the Commission in 2022. A number of opinions addressed more than one aspect of the ethics laws.



All Commission advisory opinions, from 1974 to present, can be accessed and researched without cost on our website: <http://www.ethics.state.fl.us>.

Training & Education

Pursuant to Section 112.3142, Florida Statutes, Florida's Constitutional officers (including the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Chief Financial Officer, Commissioner of Agriculture, state attorneys, public defenders, sheriffs, tax collectors, property appraisers, supervisors of elections, clerks of the circuit court, county commissioners, district school board members, and superintendents of schools), elected municipal officers, and CRA members are required to complete four hours of ethics training each calendar year.

The training must include:

- Article II, Section 8 of the Florida Constitution
- Part III, Chapter 112, Florida Statutes (Code of Ethics)
- Public Records
- Public Meetings (Sunshine Law)

The requirement may be satisfied by completion of a continuing legal education class or other continuing professional education class, seminar, or presentation if the required subjects are covered. The Commission has a training page on its website that features the latest administrative rules and ethics opinions on the mandatory training requirements. From that page, individuals can access free training audio and video of the Commission's staff, as well as a listing of live training opportunities conducted by staff at various locations around the state.

Speaking Engagements

A vital part of the Commission's mission is to educate public officers and employees regarding the standards of conduct and financial disclosure requirements of the Code of Ethics. As personnel and resources are available, members of the Commission's staff conduct training for public officials throughout the state. Commission staff presented educational programs to the following groups and organizations during 2022:

- Judges of Compensation Claims
- Florida Department of Revenue's Property Tax Oversight Courses
- Department of Revenue's Duties & Responsibilities of Florida's Tax Collectors
- Florida Bar online Education Law workshop
- Florida Public Pension Trustees Association's Winter Conference
- The Florida Bar's Annual Sunshine Law, Public Records, & Ethics Conference
- Florida Court Clerks & Comptrollers Winter Conference
- The Florida Bar's City, County, & Local Board Certification Review Course
- Florida Justice Administrative Commission Conference
- Florida Department of Health Attorneys
- 2022 Conference of County Court Judges
- Excambia County senior staff
- Florida School Board Attorneys Association
- Broward County School Board
- Florida Association of Counties
- Florida Senate

Financial Disclosure

The Florida Commission on Ethics is required by statute to compile an annual mailing list of elected and appointed officials and employees subject to filing annual financial disclosure. Additionally the Commission was tasked with the development of an electronic filing system. The phased launch began January 1, 2022 with Form 6 filers. The system was paused in June and relaunched January 1, 2023. Form 1 filers will file electronically beginning January 1, 2024. The Commission has invested significant staff hours over the past year to the details of the development and launch of the system and the Commission expects significant workload increases with the rollout of the program.

Section 112.3144, Florida Statutes, applies to persons subject to the annual filing of full and public disclosure under Section 8, Article II of the State Constitution or other state law. These individuals file Commission on Ethics Form 6, Full and Public Disclosure of Financial Interests.

Section 112.3145, Florida Statutes, applies to local officers, state officers, and specified state employees subject to the annual filing of a more limited statement of financial interests. These individuals file Commission on Ethics Form 1, Statement of Financial Interests.

The deadline for filing disclosure is July 1 of each year. A grace period is provided until September 1 of each year. The Commission on Ethics and Supervisors of Elections are required to certify after that time the names of, and positions held by, persons who fail to file by the end of the grace period.

Those who did not file their annual disclosure form (either Form 6 or Form 1) by September 1, 2021, were subject to automatic fines of \$25 for each late day, up to a maximum of \$1,500. Modeled after the automatic fine system in place for campaign finance reports, the law allows the Ethics Commission to hear appeals and to waive fines under limited circumstances. Information on the following pages reflects compliance rates and disposition of appeals.

Compliance

There was more than a 98% overall compliance with the annual reporting requirement in 2022. On the local level, 20 counties reported 100% compliance in 2022. The following table reflects on a county-by-county basis the number of officials and employees subject to disclosure, the number delinquent, and the percentages of compliance. Also provided is a chart which outlines filing compliance from 1992 to present.

2022 Financial Disclosure Compliance Figures				
County	Delinquent Filers	Timely Filers	Total Filers	Compliance Rate
Alachua	5	280	285	98.2%
Baker	3	45	48	93.8%
Bay	1	269	270	99.6%
Bradford	0	63	63	100.0%
Brevard	14	772	786	98.2%
Broward	84	2309	2393	96.5%
Calhoun	0	30	30	100.0%
Charlotte	1	163	164	99.4%
Citrus	0	110	110	100.0%
Clay	1	219	220	99.5%
Collier	0	389	389	100.0%
Columbia	2	78	80	97.5%
Miami-Dade	147	2378	2525	94.2%
Desoto	2	67	69	97.1%
Dixie	1	34	35	97.1%
Duval	1	382	383	99.7%
Escambia	4	171	175	97.7%
Flagler	2	183	185	98.9%
Franklin	1	64	65	98.5%
Gadsden	6	92	98	93.9%
Gilchrist	0	40	40	100.0%
Glades	0	38	38	100.0%
Gulf	0	53	53	100.0%
Hamilton	1	47	48	97.9%
Hardee	2	54	56	96.4%
Hendry	0	96	96	100.0%
Hernando	1	87	88	98.9%
Highlands	5	146	151	96.7%
Hillsborough	76	1322	1398	94.6%
Holmes	0	69	69	100.0%
Indian River	0	237	237	100.0%
Jackson	2	176	178	98.9%
Jefferson	1	44	45	97.8%
Lafayette	0	19	19	100.0%
Lake	6	477	483	98.8%
Lee	25	1007	1032	97.6%
Leon	3	234	237	98.7%
Levy	1	122	123	99.2%
Liberty	0	29	29	100.0%
Madison	2	66	68	97.1%

2022 Financial Disclosure Compliance Figures				
County	Delinquent Filers	Timely Filers	Total Filers	Compliance Rate
Manatee	10	501	511	98.0%
Marion	7	220	227	96.9%
Martin	0	250	250	100.0%
Monroe	0	205	205	100.0%
Nassau	3	189	192	98.4%
Okaloosa	5	323	328	98.5%
Okeechobee	0	79	79	100.0%
Orange	35	858	893	96.1%
Osceola	0	250	250	100.0%
Palm Beach	86	1562	1648	94.8%
Pasco	4	469	473	99.2%
Pinellas	10	1215	1225	99.2%
Polk	36	624	660	94.5%
Putnam	2	131	133	98.5%
Saint Johns	1	352	353	99.7%
Saint Lucie	2	283	285	99.3%
Santa Rosa	1	183	184	99.5%
Sarasota	2	380	382	99.5%
Seminole	12	411	423	97.2%
Sumter	2	152	154	98.7%
Suwannee	0	56	56	100.0%
Taylor	3	49	52	94.2%
Union	0	38	38	100.0%
Volusia	5	647	652	99.2%
Wakulla	0	62	62	100.0%
Walton	4	126	130	96.9%
Washington	0	61	61	100.0%
TOTAL-FORM 1 LOCAL	630	22137	22767	97.2%
TOTAL-FORM 1 STATE	79	12822	12901	99.4%
TOTAL-FORM 6 (NOT JUDGES)	6	1372	1378	99.6%
TOTAL-JUDGES (ACTIVE)	0	1022	1022	100.0%
TOTAL-JUDGES (SENIOR)	0	189	189	100.0%
OVERALL TOTAL	715	37542	38257	98.1%

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE FILING COMPLIANCE (1992 - 2022)			
Year	# of Individuals Required to File	# of Form 1 & 6 Delinquent Filers	Overall Compliance Rate
1992	37,631	2,564	93%
1992	37,863	2,576	93%
1994	38,711	2,810	93%
1995	39,165	2,791	93%
1996	40,529	3,188	92%
1997	41,345	3,030	93%
1998	41,996	3,116	93%
1999	42,185	3,278	92%
2000	40,471	3,368	92%
2001	30,025	1,043	97%
2002	27,206	911	98%
2003	34,298	878	97%
2004	35,984	1,124	97%
2005	36,504	723	98%
2006	35,725	724	98%
2007	35,659	691	98%
2008	36,092	767	98%
2009	37,077	353	99%
2010	36,961	340	99%
2011	37,686	361	99%
2012	37,306	356	99%
2013	37,890	309	99%
2014	38,181	249	99%
2015	38,613	291	99%
2016	38,824	289	99%
2017	38,909	314	99%
2018	39,402	326	99%
2019	39,433	412	99%
2020	38,792	456	99%
2021	38,519	604	98%
2022	38,257	715	98%

Financial Disclosure Compliance History



Summary of Local Level Form 1 Compliance

- Total compliance rate for Form 1 Statement of Financial Interests was 97.2%. As in previous years, disclosure staff sent reminder postcards to delinquent filers immediately prior to the start of the statutory fining period. Commission staff also telephoned filers to remind them to file. These reminders are not required by statute, but are part of the Commission's additional efforts to encourage compliance.
- Of the 22,767 individuals required to file, 630 were delinquent.
- 20 counties reported 100% compliance in 2022.

Summary of State Level Form 1 Compliance

- The Form 1 compliance rate was 99.4%. Postcard and telephone reminders also were used with these filers.
- Of the 12,901 individuals required to file, only 79 were delinquent.

Summary of Full Disclosure (Form 6) Compliance

- Form 6 Full and Public Disclosure of Financial Interests compliance rate for elected constitutional officers and employees other than judges was 99.6%. Postcard and telephone reminders also were used with these filers.
- There were only 6 delinquencies out of a total of 1,378 individuals (excluding judges) required to file Form 6.

Summary of 2022 Overall Compliance

- Out of the 38,257 individuals who were non-judicial financial disclosure filers, there were only 715 (approximately 2%) officers and employees who failed to do so.

Financial Disclosure Fine Appeals

Individuals delinquent in filing the annual financial disclosure form (those who did not file by the end of the September 1 grace period provided by law), are fined \$25 per day for each day late, up to a statutory maximum of \$1,500.

Individuals may opt to pay the assessed fine or may appeal the assessed fine. Under the law, the Commission has the authority to waive or reduce an assessed fine if an appeal is filed reflecting that "unusual circumstances" caused the failure to file the form on time.

For fines where there is no appeal and no payment, a Default Final Order is rendered and the cases are either transmitted to private collection agencies for collection, or the Commission attempts to make collections.

The following reflects the Commission's actions taken on appeals of assessed fines at its regularly scheduled meetings held during calendar year 2022. (The fines for late filings in 2022 recently have been assessed and will be reported in 2023).

Financial Disclosure Appeals 2022 Actions of Commission on Ethics					
COMMISSION MEETING	WAIVED	REDUCED	DENIED	DEFAULT ORDERS APPROVED	UNCOLLECTIBLE
January 21, 2022	6	0	0	0	0
March 4, 2022	0	0	0	0	0
April 22, 2022	5	0	0	0	0
June 3, 2022	1	0	0	0	0
July 22, 2022	4	0	2	0	0
September 9, 2022	0	0	0	0	0
October 21, 2022	0	0	0	0	2
December 2, 2022	1	0	0	0	0

2022 Legislative Recommendations

Conflicts of Interest

Section 112.313(7)(a), Florida Statutes, prohibits a public officer or employee from having a contractual relationship with a company doing business with the official's own agency. So City Councilman A cannot contract with Business B, if Business B is doing business with his City. But if Councilman A creates "A, Inc.," that corporation can do business with Business B without violating the law, even if "A, Inc.," is solely owned by Councilman A. The Commission has seen this as thwarting the underlying goal of the law, which is to prevent officials from having relationships with companies doing business with their agencies.

Voting Conflicts Law

Under current law, Section 112.3143, Florida Statutes, local elected officials can participate in the discussion of a measure in which they have a conflict without revealing the existence of that conflict until the vote is actually taken. This means the official can make every effort to persuade his or her colleagues without telling them (and the public) about the conflict. Appointed officials, in contrast, must declare their conflict before participating in the discussion of the measure. Elected officials should have to adhere to the same standard.

In addition, state officers only have to abstain if the measure helps or hurts them personally. Unlike local officials, they do not have to abstain when the measure benefits their employer, relative, etc.

The Commission has expressed that the voting conflict standard should be the same for everyone, whether the official is appointed or elected and whether the official is a state or local official; and that the exemption from using the Commission's conflict disclosure form applicable only to Legislators be eliminated.

Enhanced Financial Disclosure for Local Elected Officials

Elected municipal officials are very important and administer vast amounts of public resources. For these, and other reasons, their disclosure should be on par with that of county officials and others who file Form 6, rather than Form 1. The Commission believes the enhanced disclosure should be applied to all elected municipal officials regardless of the population or revenue of the municipality.

Dismissal of Complaints Alleging de minimis Financial Disclosure Violations

Section 112.324(11), Florida Statutes, currently allows the Commission to dismiss complaints alleging de minimis violations attributable to inadvertent or unintentional error, except for financial disclosure complaints. The Commission believes the statute should be amended to allow for dismissal of financial disclosure complaints, too.

Dismissal of Lobbying Firm Audit matters

Section 112.324(12), Florida Statutes, which allows the Commission to dismiss complaints when it finds that the public interest would not be served by proceeding further on the complaint, currently is not available for dismissal of lobbying firm audit matters under Section 112.3215, Florida Statutes, even when circumstances justify such a dismissal. The Commission recommends amending Section 112.324(12) to allow for dismissal of audit matters. The Commission also recommends Section 112.3215(9) be amended to allow the Commission to find probable cause, but then opt to take no further action.

Increase of Civil Penalties

Currently, Section 112.317, Florida Statutes, provides for a maximum fine of \$10,000 for a violation of the ethics laws. This amount has not been increased since 1994. Due to inflation and seriousness of ethics offenses, the Commission believes the maximum fine amount should be increased.

Whistle Blower-like Protection for Ethics Complainants

The Commission believes that the threat of adverse employment or personnel actions in retaliation for a person's filing of an ethics complaint discourages the filing of valid complaints. Thus, the Commission seeks the enactment of protections or remedies, akin to those in the "Whistle-blower's Act," Sections 112.3187-112.31895, Florida Statutes, for the benefit of ethics complainants.

Ethics Training

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 112.3142(2)(e), Florida Statutes, a constitutional officer or elected municipal officer assuming a new office or new term of office after March 31 is not required to complete ethics training for the calendar year in which their term of office began. In 2019, the law was amended to require commissioners of community redevelopment agencies to complete 4 hours of ethics training. However, they were not included in the new office or new term of office exemption language contained in Section 112.3142(2)(e), Florida Statutes. As a result, CRA board members are required to take four hours of training regardless of when they take office, even if their start date is near the very end of the year. The Commission believes CRA board members should be added to the exemption language appearing in Section 112.3142(2)(e), Florida Statutes.

Representing Clients Before One's Own Board

The Commission has opinions as early as 1977 and even since 2020 interpreting Section 112.313(7), Florida Statutes, to say, in essence, that if a person serves on a board, he cannot represent clients before that board, and neither can other members of his professional firm. This interpretation is similar to the Rules of Professional Conduct of the Florida Bar, which impute the conflict of one lawyer to all lawyers in the firm. The Commission views this as an important public protection, and opposes any relaxation of this standard.

Gifts, Expenditures, or Compensation from Lobbyists

The Commission opposed HB 1435 and SB 1490 in the 2020 session. These bills, which did not pass, would have allowed donations from lobbyists or their principals, unlimited in amount, to certain public employees and appointed public officials if the donations were used toward costs associated with serious injury, disease, or illness of the employee, appointed officer, or his or her child. Such a vast exemption to the gift and expenditure laws, aimed at public officials when they are most vulnerable to undue influence from special interests, would seriously undermine effective restrictions and prohibitions which have protected the public trust for many years. The Commission continues to oppose an unlimited exemption to the gift and expenditure laws.