



## BILL SUMMARY

---

---

# HF 2109 Ethics Law Reforms

Status of Bill: House Floor  
Committee: Ethics Committee  
Floor Manager: Rep. Tyler Olson  
Research Analyst: Paulee Lipsman 515-281-5230  
[Paulee.lipsman@legis.state.ia.us](mailto:Paulee.lipsman@legis.state.ia.us)  
Committee Vote 5-0

January 25, 2009

---

---

### Background:

This bill will improve compliance with the Iowa and House ethics laws and will provide better accuracy and transparency.

### Summary:

#### Section 1. – Receptions

This allows spouses and family members to attend receptions. Currently, 68B.22 (4) says public officials, public employees, candidates, public employees, or candidates can attend receptions. The rest of 68B.22 exceptions to the gift law include family members, so this will bring receptions into line with the rest of the law.

This section also requires a sponsor of a reception to **register prior** to the function. After the function, the sponsor has **28 calendar days to file a report disclosing the amount spent**. In this way, we will know who is having receptions and can better track reporting of expenses. This will be done on a website and it will automatically show if a sponsor files late. The reporting requirement after the event was changed from 5 business days to 28 calendar days so that sponsors would be able to receive all the bills for the event.

#### Section 2. – Authority over Clients

This section will give the Legislative Ethics Committees authority over clients as well as over legislators and lobbyists. This is important because we will now require clients to file reports rather than lobbyists.

#### Section 3 and Section 5. – Complaints against clients

Allows complaints to be filed against clients.

#### Section 4. – Legislative committees can take actions on own.

Allows legislative ethics committees to take action without going to a independent special counsel. The committee can adopt rules to take action only if there is no dispute between the parties regarding the material facts.

#### Section 6 and Section 7. – Strikes Lobbyist Expense Reports

These section strikes the requirement that lobbyists file expense reports with the legislative ethics committees and the executive branch ethics board because the information is obtainable elsewhere, is not

allowed, or is not of much use. Instead, the client will file an yearly report. Here is why this was suggested:

1. What people want and need to know is how much the clients are paying to lobby the executive and legislative branch
2. We do not need to know how much a lobbyist spends on cell phones, paper, or rent.
3. Campaign contributions are banned during session.
4. Gifts are not allowed except functions and a few other exceptions.
5. Campaign contributions are now easy to find on the campaign finance searchable database so anyone can see how much a given lobbyists or client is giving to candidates after session is over.

#### Section 8. – Requires lobbyist to register

They must register before lobbying and must identify all their clients.

We will no longer require federal, state, and local officials or employees representing the official position to present a letter of authorization from their department, commission, board, or agencies before lobbying before the General Assembly.

#### Section 9. – Client Reports

Requires clients to file a yearly report by July 31 that includes the total amount of all salaries, fees, retainers and any other money paid to a lobbyist for lobbying both the legislative and executive branches. This will give us a total picture of how much a client spends to lobby for the passage or defeat of legislation.

#### Section 10. – Repeal

This repeals the lobbyist reports. Lobbyists must still register and list their clients, however.