

ETHICS

IOWA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

END OF SESSION, 2010

ETHICS IMPROVEMENTS

This bill will improve compliance with Iowa and House ethics laws and will provide better accuracy and transparency. This bill requires a sponsor of a reception to register prior to the function. After the function, the sponsor has 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 Legislative Ethics Committees will now have authority over clients as well as over legislators and lobbyists. Clients must file a yearly report 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.

(House File 2109, Signed by Governor, February 2, 2010)

HOUSE ETHICS RULES CHANGES

This resolution changes the process for handling a complaint in which there is no dispute as to the validity of the complaint. Under current rules, an independent special counsel would be called in, even if both parties agree the complaint is valid. This resolution would allow the ethics committee to bypass the independent special counsel and allow them to issue an admonishment, issue an order to cease and desist, or make a recommendation to the full House that the person who is the subject of the complaint be censured or reprimanded. In all other cases, the independent counsel would be brought in and would make a determination on whether probable cause exists that a violation of has occurred.

(HR 128, March 25, 2010)