

## E-ALERT | Election & Political Law

March 29, 2013

### GEORGIA LEGISLATURE LIMITS GIFTS FROM LOBBYISTS

Last night, the Georgia legislature reached a compromise and passed a new gift law with no time to spare before the end of the legislative session. The fate of the new gift law was in limbo earlier this week when the House passed a complete ban on gifts from lobbyists to lawmakers and the Senate capped gifts at \$100 only days before sine die. Prompted by Governor Nathan Deal and the threat of being called back for a special legislative session, Georgia legislators unanimously passed a compromise.

The final bill the House and Senate passed Thursday night will limit gifts from lobbyists to legislators to \$75. The \$75 limit is a per occurrence, per lobbyist cap, with no aggregate limit. The \$75 limit on gifts to legislators is a significant change to Georgia's current gift rules, which do not limit the amount of gifts a lobbyist may give to a legislator. The new limit, however, has some notable exceptions for group dinners and lobbyist-funded domestic travel. Specifically, the following "lobbying expenditures" are not subject to the \$75 cap:

- Food, beverages, and registration at group events, which include events where all members of the Georgia House, Senate, a standing committee of either chamber, or a caucus are invited;
- Transportation, lodging, travel, and registration for a public officer and necessary staff attending educational, informational, charitable, or civic meetings or conferences in the United States that directly relate to official duties; and
- Food and beverages for the public officer, necessary staff, and spouse while attending an educational, informational, charitable, or civic meeting or conference in the United States.

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If you have any questions concerning the material discussed in this client alert, please contact the following members of our election and political law group:

<b>Robert Kelner</b>	+1.202.662.5503	<a href="mailto:rkelner@cov.com">rkelner@cov.com</a>
<b>Robert Lenhard</b>	+1.202.662.5940	<a href="mailto:rlenhard@cov.com">rlenhard@cov.com</a>
<b>Derek Lawlor</b>	+1.202.662.5091	<a href="mailto:dlawlor@cov.com">dlawlor@cov.com</a>
<b>Angelle Smith</b>	+1.202.662.5211	<a href="mailto:asmith@cov.com">asmith@cov.com</a>

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