

**RI TAX COLLECTOR'S ASSOCIATION**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**May 8, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Rhode Island Tax Collector's Association (RITCA) was held at Richard's Pub, 3347 South County Trail, East Greenwich, RI 02818.

**Present:** Rosemarie Silva (West Warwick) – President  
Michelle DiMeo (Bristol) – Vice President  
Caitlyn Choiniere (Smithfield) – Secretary  
Jo Anne Santos (Charlestown) – Treasurer/Education Board Chair  
Charlene Randall (West Greenwich) – Executive Board/Mtg Coordinator  
Mary Lynn Caswell (Hopkinton) - Executive Board

**Absent:** Jane Steere (Glocester) – Membership Board Chair

**I. Call to Order:**

The regular meeting for RITCA was called to order by President Rosemarie Silva at 9:40 am.

**II. Secretary Report:**

The membership voted to approve the minutes from the December 13, 2023, and February 21, 2024, meetings. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Jo Anne Santos and seconded by Tina. The motion carried unanimously.

**III. Treasurer's Report:**

Treasurer Jo Anne Santos presented the membership with the Treasurer's Report. The current balance of the checking account was \$20,500.77. See attached. A motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made by Caitlyn Choiniere and seconded by Mary Lynn Caswell. The motion carried unanimously.

**IV. Reports from Committees:**

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:**

Stacy Gorman has volunteered to become the Legislative Committee Chairperson. She will be our liaison when it comes to the League and legislative issues.

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:** No Report

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE:**

Jo Anne Santos informed the membership that the Education Committee has met and is in the process of revising the Certification Handbook. The committee will also be handing out CE (continuing education) credits to anyone who is present at our

meeting presentations. They have also been discussing future CE credits to maintain RICC status.

V. **Reading of Communications:** None

VI. **Unfinished Business:**

The Board is still in the process of forming a committee that would be in charge of issuing a scholarship from the RITCA. If anyone is interested in helping, please let Rosemarie know.

Don't forget that the NRTCTA will be having their Annual Conference in Sturbridge, Ma this year. Please see their website for more information about the Conference.

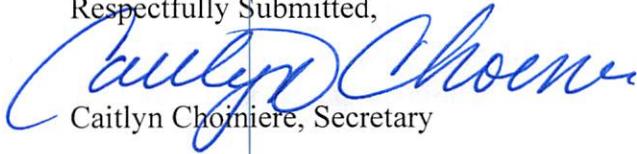
VII. **New Business:**

The next meeting will be on October 9<sup>th</sup> at Richard's Pub. We are looking for any suggestions for future speakers.

VIII. **Adjournment:**

Mary Lynn Caswell made a motion to adjourn. Caitlyn Choiniere seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The May 8, 2024, regular meeting of the RITCA was adjourned at 9:53 am.

Respectfully Submitted,



Caitlyn Choiniere, Secretary

**Rhode Island Tax Collector's Association  
 Quarterly Meeting, May 8, 2024  
 Treasurer's Report**

<b>Last Balance Reported January 31, 2024</b>	<b>\$20,631.76</b>
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**Income**

**Deposits:**

<b>02/20/2024-February Meeting &amp; Membership</b>	<b>\$468.00</b>
<b>02/29/2024-February Meeting &amp; Membership</b>	<b>1,122.00</b>
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>\$1,590.00</b>

**Expenses:**

<b>02/06/2024-MouseWorks</b>	<b>\$6.00</b>
<b>02/15/2024-Richard's Pub-February Meeting Deposit</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>02/15/2024-MouseWorks-Domain Name Registration</b>	<b>25.99</b>
<b>02/15/2024-Reimburse-Christine Beck Sympathy</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>02/21/2024-Richard's Pub-February Meeting</b>	<b>1,088.00</b>
<b>02/21/2024-Richard's Pub-February Meeting-Tip</b>	<b>220.00</b>
<b>02/29/2024-MouseWorks</b>	<b>12.00</b>
<b>02/29/2024-MouseWorks-Yearly Renewal</b>	<b>169.00</b>
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$1,720.99</b>

<b>Current Balance (as of April 30, 2024)</b>	<b>\$20,500.77</b>
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Respectfully submitted,

*Jo Anne Santos*  
 Jo Anne Santos

Executive Board Member, Rhode Island Tax Collector's Association

# RI TAX COLLECTOR'S ASSOCIATION

## Regular Meeting

### May 8, 2024

A regular meeting of the Rhode Island Tax Collector's Association (RITCA) was held at Richard's Pub, 3347 South County Trail, East Greenwich, RI 02818.

**Members:** (Check who is present)

- ✓ Rosemarie Silva (West Warwick) – President
- ✓ Michelle DiMeo (Bristol) – Vice President
- ✓ Caitlyn Choiniere (Smithfield) – Secretary
- ✓ Jo Anne Santos (Charlestown) – Treasurer/Education Board Chair
- ✓ Charlene Randall (West Greenwich) – Executive Board/Mtg Coordinator
- ✓ Mary Lynn Caswell (Hopkinton) – Executive Board
- Jane Steere (Glocester) – Membership Board Chair

**I. Call to Order:**

President Rosemarie Silva called the regular meeting for RITCA to order at 9:40am.

**II. Reading of the minutes from December 13, 2023 and February 21, 2024.** Joann S. 1<sup>st</sup>

**III. Treasurer's Report** see report 1<sup>st</sup> MaryLynn Tina 2<sup>nd</sup>  
2<sup>nd</sup> Caitlyn

**IV. Reports from Committees**

LEGISLATIVE: Stacy Gorman - Leg Board Chair

MEMBERSHIP: None info - Jane absent

EDUCATION: Revise handbook, CEC office of Municipal Affairs

**V. Reading of Communications**

None

↓  
→ We will receive credit for presentations Cont. Ed Cert.

→ discussing future CEC's to maintain RITCA Status

**VI. Unfinished Business**

- Working on scholarship committee
- Start Raffle again
- NE Tax Assoc. Conference

**VII. New Business**

- Next Mtg Oct 9<sup>th</sup>
- Suggestions for Speakers for Next Mtg

**VIII. Adjournment:**

Mary Lynn made a motion to adjourn. Carlynn seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. The December 13, 2023 meeting of the RITCA was adjourned at 9:53.



[www.ritca.org](http://www.ritca.org)

**RHODE ISLAND TAX COLLECTOR'S ASSOCIATION MEETING**

**May 8, 2024**

**RICHARD'S PUB**

**3347 SOUTH COUNTY TRAIL, EAST GREENWICH, RI 02818**

**TOPICS:**

- 1. RI ETHICS**
- 2. RI LEGISLATION**

**9:00 am Registration**

**9:30 am RITCA Meeting**

- I. Call to Order RITCA Meeting**
- II. Reading of the minutes of February 21, 2024**
- III. Treasurer's Report**
- IV. Report from Committees: Legislative, Membership, Education, DMV**
- V. Reading of Communications**
- VI. Unfinished Business**
- VII. New Business – CE Credits Certification Form - Save the Date for September's Meeting**
- VIII. Adjournment**

**10:00 am Brunch**

**10:30 am Program Presentation: RI Ethics Commission**  
**Guest Speaker: Lynne Radiches – Staff Attorney & Education Coordinator**  
**Program Presentation: Legislation**  
**Guest Speaker: David M. Bodah, RI League of Cities and Towns Associate Director**



**RHODE ISLAND TAX COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION MEETING**

**TOPICS: ETHICS & LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, May 8, 2024

**PLACE:** Richard's Pub  
3347 S County Trail, East Greenwich, RI 02818

**PRICE:** Breakfast Buffet- \$36.00

**TIME:** 9:00 Registration

9:30 General Meeting

10:00 Breakfast

10:30 Speakers:

Lynne Radiches, RI Ethics Commission Staff Attorney & Education Coordinator

David M. Bodah, RI League of Cities & Towns Associate Director

**NAMES OF THOSE ATTENDING**

**CITY/TOWN/BUSINESS**

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Please contact Charlene with your reservation before May 1 [cgrandall@wgtownri.org](mailto:cgrandall@wgtownri.org)

Make check payable to RITCA and return to:

Charlene Randall  
Town of West Greenwich  
280 Victory Highway, West Greenwich RI 02817

A lighthouse on a rocky shore at dusk, with a bridge in the background.

*Welcome!*

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INTRODUCTION TO THE  
**RHODE ISLAND**  
**ETHICS COMMISSION**  
AND THE  
**RHODE ISLAND CODE OF ETHICS**



## **Article III, Section 7- Ethical conduct.**

“The people of the State of Rhode Island believe that public officials and employees must adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct, respect the public trust and the rights of all persons, be open, accountable and responsive, avoid the appearance of impropriety and not use their position for private gain or advantage.”

The Rhode Island Ethics Commission is a constitutionally mandated body authorized to adopt, administer, and enforce the State of Rhode Island's Code of Ethics in Government.



**Article III, Section 8 –  
Ethics Commission –  
Code of Ethics.**

The general assembly shall establish an independent non-partisan ethics commission which shall adopt a code of ethics including, but not limited to, provisions on conflicts of interest, confidential information, use of position, contracts with government agencies and financial disclosure.



# Ethics based on CULTURE

Many people think that whether something is “ethical” depends on the setting in which it occurs, taking into account the local culture, habits, and customs.



# Ethics based on CONSEQUENCES



Ethical or unethical conduct is determined by examining the outcome. Ethical conduct is behavior produces more positive results than negative results, in quantity and quality.

# Ethics based on CHARACTER

Ethical conduct is determined by asking: "What would a virtuous person do under the circumstances?" The focus is on one's character and motives.





The Code of Ethics tells us what actions to avoid, without regard to culture, consequence, or character.

Ethical or unethical conduct is determined NOT by looking at the results, but by looking at the conduct itself and judging its inherent rightness or wrongness.

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**Focus on your ACTION, not the result !!!**

## **(9) Members – appointed by the Governor**

- ▶ Advisory Powers
- ▶ Investigative Powers
- ▶ Adjudicative Powers
- ▶ Removal Powers

While serving on the Ethics Commission, members are prohibited from holding or campaigning for public office, holding office in any political party or on any political committee, and participating in or contributing to any political campaign.



State of Rhode Island  
**Ethics Commission**

# STAFF

- Executive Director/Chief Prosecutor
- Senior Staff Attorney
- Education Coordinator/Staff Attorney
- Staff Attorneys
- Investigators
- Office Manager
- Financial Disclosure Officer
- Support Staff



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## Who is subject to the Code of Ethics?

- (1) State and municipal elected officials;
- (2) State and municipal appointed officials; and
- (3) Employees of state and local government, and members of boards, commissions and agencies.



**CONFLICT  
OF  
INTEREST**



## A person subject to the Code of Ethics . . .

. . . may **not** participate in any matter if it is **reasonably foreseeable** (*more than conceivable – less than certain*) that:  
he/she/they,  
or any family member,  
or any business associate, or  
any business by which the person is employed or which the person represents, will derive a **direct monetary gain** or suffer a **direct monetary loss** by reason of his/her/their official activity.

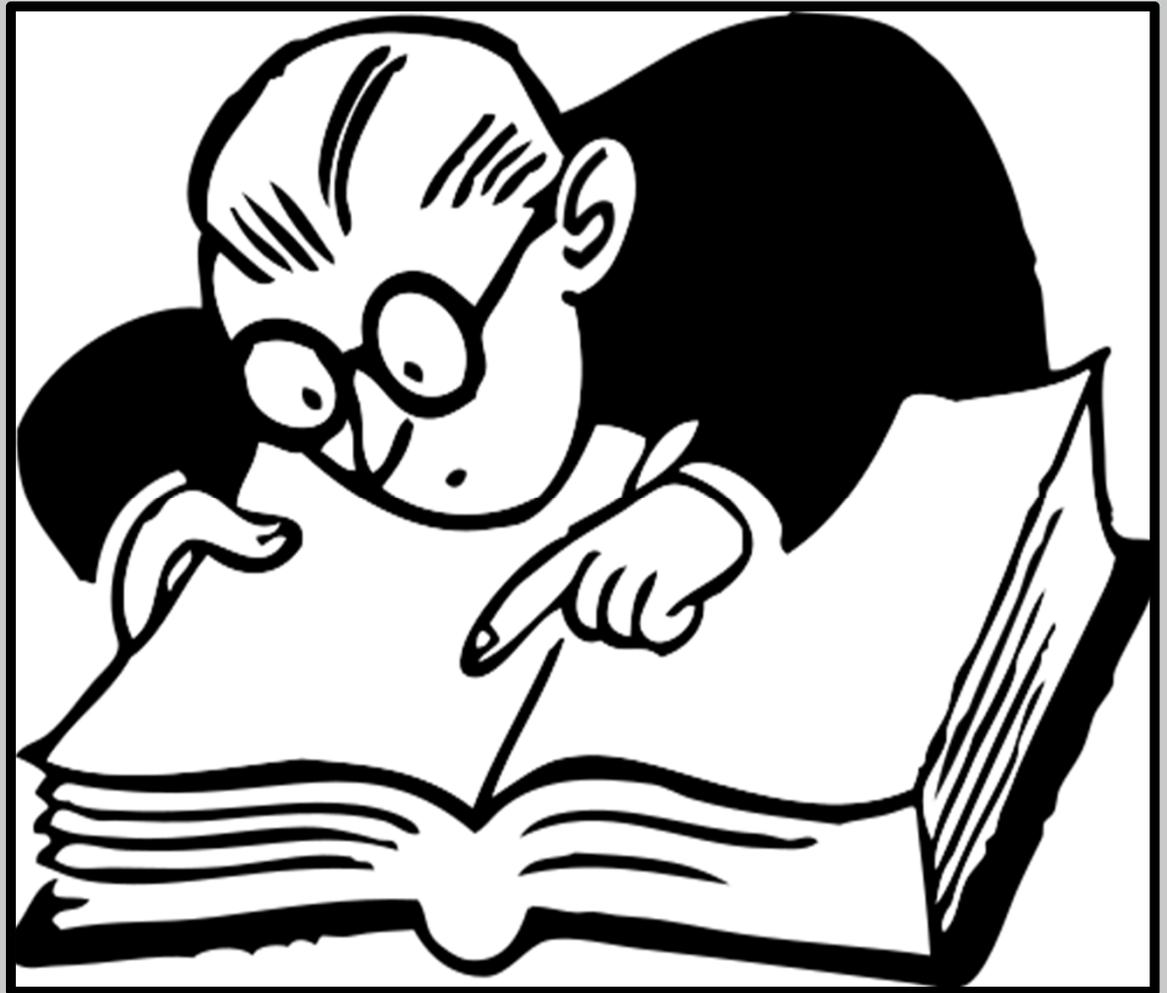


## **Business Associates**

persons or entities with whom  
you are joined to achieve a  
**common financial objective**

### **EXAMPLES**

- business partners
- people you have hired such as an attorney, accountant, realtor, contractor, *etc.*
- landlord/tenant
- any businesses or organizations, even if not-for-profit, for which you are an officer or serve on the Board of Directors, regardless of whether you are paid for your service



# Ongoing Business Association



- parties conducting ongoing business transactions
- outstanding accounts
- anticipated future relationship

# Family Members

Whether by blood, marriage, or adoption:

Spouse

Parents

Children

Siblings

Grandparents / Grandchildren

Aunts / Uncles

Nieces / Nephews

First Cousins





A conflict of interest is a situation in which a person's public duties and private life intersect.

It is not unethical to have a conflict of interest.

It does not violate the Code of Ethics to have a conflict of interest.

It is not the conflict that is the problem; rather, the potential problem is the failure to identify and manage the conflict.

**Do I have a conflict of interest? Ask yourself –  
Is it “reasonably foreseeable” that . . .**



a decision that I am helping to make, as part of my public duties, will result in a financial benefit *or* detriment to:

**Me;**

**My family/household member;**

**My business associate; *or***

**A business by which I am employed?**

## Do I Have a Conflict of Interest?



### Ask yourself:

Even if there is no financial impact, is a **family member, household member, business associate, or business by which I am employed** a party to, or participating in, the matter being discussed?

If the answer is **“Yes,”** then you have a conflict of interest and **you must recuse** from any participation in the matter.

# HOW TO RECUSE

1. Complete a *Statement of Conflict of Interest* form.
2. Present the original to your presiding officer, appointing authority, director, or immediate supervisor.
3. Send a copy to the Ethics Commission.



And if nepotism exists, my brothers will root it out!



**NEPOTISM**

**You may not participate . . .** in any matter as part of your public duties if there is reason to believe or expect that any person within your family or a household member . . .

- is a party to or participant; *or*
- will derive a direct monetary gain; *or*
- will suffer a direct monetary loss; *or*
- will obtain an employment advantage.



The Code's prohibitions against nepotism apply regardless of whether a family or household member is objectively the most qualified candidate for a job or is deserving of promotion.

The policy underlying the prohibitions against nepotism is premised on the recognition that it is difficult for any person to be truly objective when considering matters impacting family/household members and furthers the constitutionally founded goal of avoiding the appearance of impropriety.

## Examples . . .

- hiring
- awarding of contract
- decision regarding property
- appointment to compensated position
- participation in disciplinary matter in which employment is at risk



# ADVOCACY / SUPERVISION

You may not participate in the **supervision, evaluation, appointment, classification, promotion, transfer, or discipline** of any person in your family or household.

You may not delegate to a subordinate any tasks relating to the **supervision, evaluation, appointment, classification, promotion, transfer, or discipline** of any person in your family or household.

**The Code of Ethics allows the Ethics Commission to approve an alternate chain of command.**

**The person stepping in for the person with the conflict of interest:**

- must be of equal rank or higher
- may not be presumed acceptable prior to the issuance of a duly-authorized advisory opinion





Recusal does not mean that the public official must leave the room if it is an open meeting, although it is best practice to do so.

However, if a public body is in executive session, a public official who has recused from participation due to a conflict of interest has no more right to be in the room than any other member of the general public.



No person subject to the Code of Ethics may enter into any contract with a state or municipal agency unless . . .



. . . the contract has been awarded through an open and public process, including prior public notice and subsequent public disclosure of all proposals considered and contracts awarded.



# Public Notice

Contracts for professional services which have been customarily awarded without competitive bidding shall not be subject to competitive bidding if awarded through a process of public notice and disclosure of financial details.

physicians • attorneys • engineers • architects • accountants • land surveyors • psychologists



## SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

You may have a private or public sector job in addition to your state/municipal position; however, you may not accept outside employment that **impairs your independence of judgment** or that **induces you to disclose confidential government information.**

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## Factors Considered

- ◆ nexus between public duties & private employment
  - ◆ work must be completed outside normal work hours & without use of public resources
  - ◆ official/employee may not appear before own agency
  - ◆ work must be conducted outside of areas over which official/employee has decision-making jurisdiction
  - ◆ official/employee may not use public position to solicit business or customers
-



## Confidential Information

You may not use or disclose, for financial gain\*, confidential information acquired in the course of your official duties.

\*self/family member/business associate/business by which employed

# GIFTS

**If you participate in making decisions . . .**

you may not accept cash or forgiveness of debt from interested persons.

An **“interested person”** has a direct financial interest in a decision that a public official/employee makes or participates in making.

Interested persons include employees or representatives of an individual, business, organization, or entity.

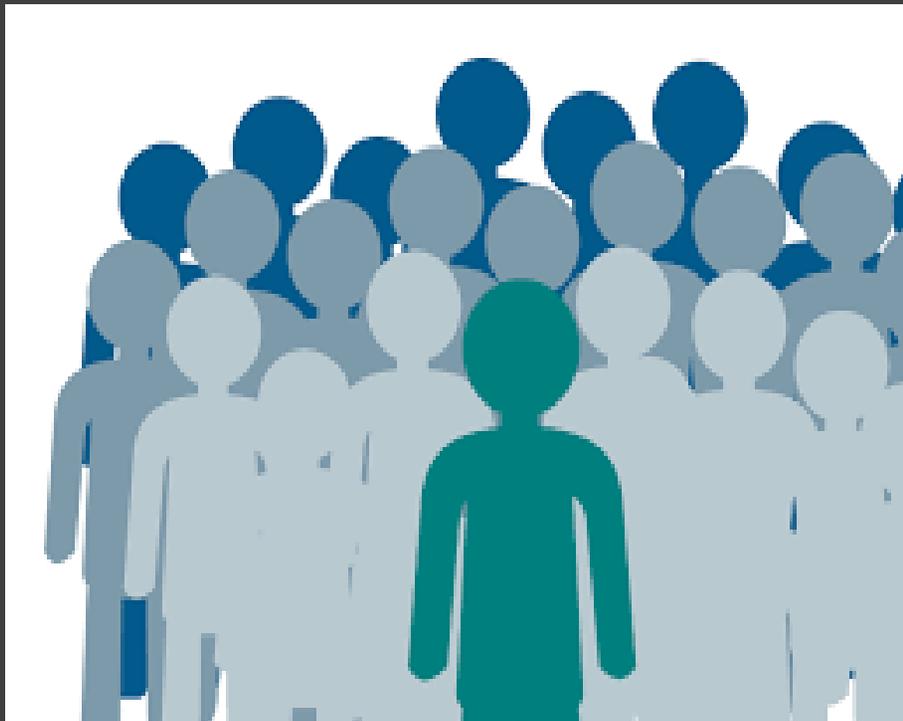


# GIFTS



You may accept things of value up to and including **\$25 per instance** and **\$75 per year** from each interested person or single interested source.

# Transactions with Subordinates



You may not engage in a financial transaction, including:

- **private employment/consulting**
- **giving or receiving loans**
- **monetary/charitable contributions**

with an employee, contractor, or consultant over whom you exercise supervisory responsibilities.

# Exceptions include . . .

◆ financial transactions in the normal course of a regular commercial business or occupation;  
*or*

◆ if the subordinate initiates the financial transaction; *or*

◆ for charitable events that are sponsored by the highest official or governing body of the state or municipality.





No person subject to the Code of Ethics shall solicit or request, directly or through a surrogate, political contributions from a subordinate over whom that person exercises official supervisory responsibilities.

**This does not prohibit or limit the First Amendment right of a subordinate to make political contributions**

# REVOLVING DOOR

**Purpose:** To prevent government employees and public officials from unfairly profiting from, or otherwise trading upon, the contacts, associations, and special knowledge that they acquired during their tenure as public servants.



A hand is shown holding a white sign with the text "1 YEAR" written in large, bold, red capital letters. The background is dark and out of focus, with a blurred red light source on the left.

No elected or appointed official may accept any appointment or election that requires approval by the body of which that official is or was a member, to any position which carries with it financial benefit.

This prohibition continues for one (1) year after the termination of his/her/their membership in or on such body.

The Ethics Commission may give its approval for a particular appointment or election, if satisfied that denial of such employment or position would create a substantial hardship for the body, board, or municipality.

No municipal elected official or school committee member, whether elected or appointed, while holding office and for a period of (1) year after leaving municipal office, shall seek or accept employment with any municipal agency in the municipality in which the official serves, other than employment which was held at the time of the official's election or appointment.



You **may not represent yourself or anyone else** before the agency of which you are a member or by which you are employed or before any other agency for which your agency is the appointing authority.

You **may not serve as an expert witness** before your agency.

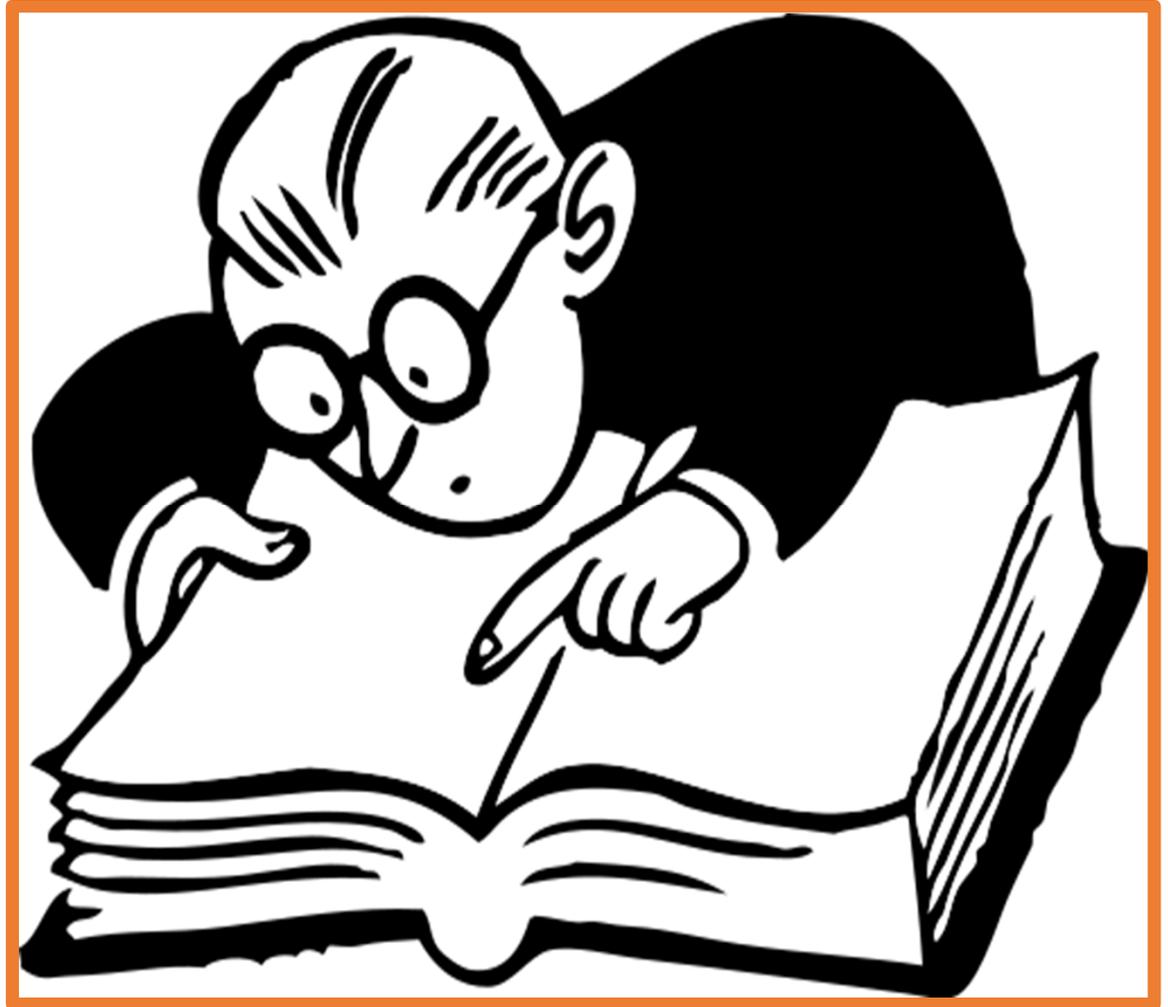
These prohibitions continue for **(1) year** after you leave your public office or employment.



## **Representation**

### **Defined**

participation in  
presentation of evidence  
or arguments before  
agency for purpose of  
influencing judgment of  
agency in own favor or in  
favor of another



# Exception

The Ethics Commission may grant a **hardship exception** allowing you to represent yourself before your own agency or before an agency for which your agency has appointing authority. To obtain an exception you **must request an advisory opinion**.

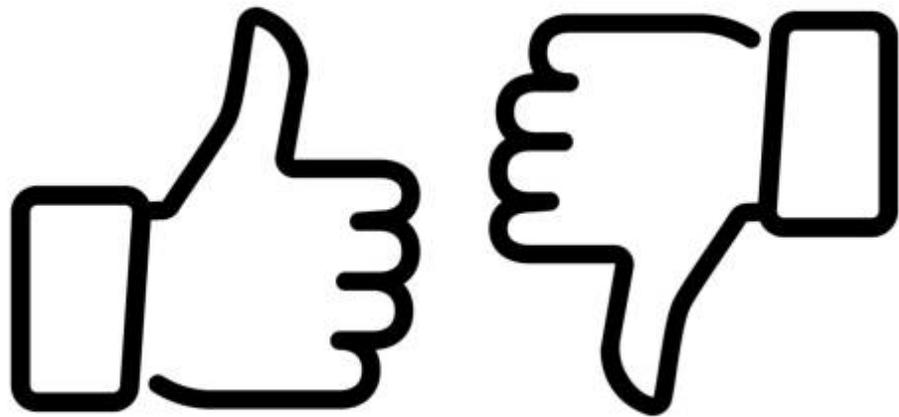


Complaints



# Filing a Complaint

- ◆ Form provided by the Ethics Commission
- ◆ Signed under oath
- ◆ Must name the individual alleged to have violated the Code (“Respondent”)
- ◆ Identify Respondent’s public office
- ◆ Detail specific acts which allegedly violated the Code
- ◆ Not public unless and until accepted by Executive Director
- ◆ Complainant not a party



**ADVISORY  
OPINIONS**



## **What Is An Advisory Opinion?**

**Legal interpretation of the Code of Ethics**

**Issued by the Ethics Commission**

**Provides specific guidance about a particular and impending circumstance**

**Based on representations of the petitioner**



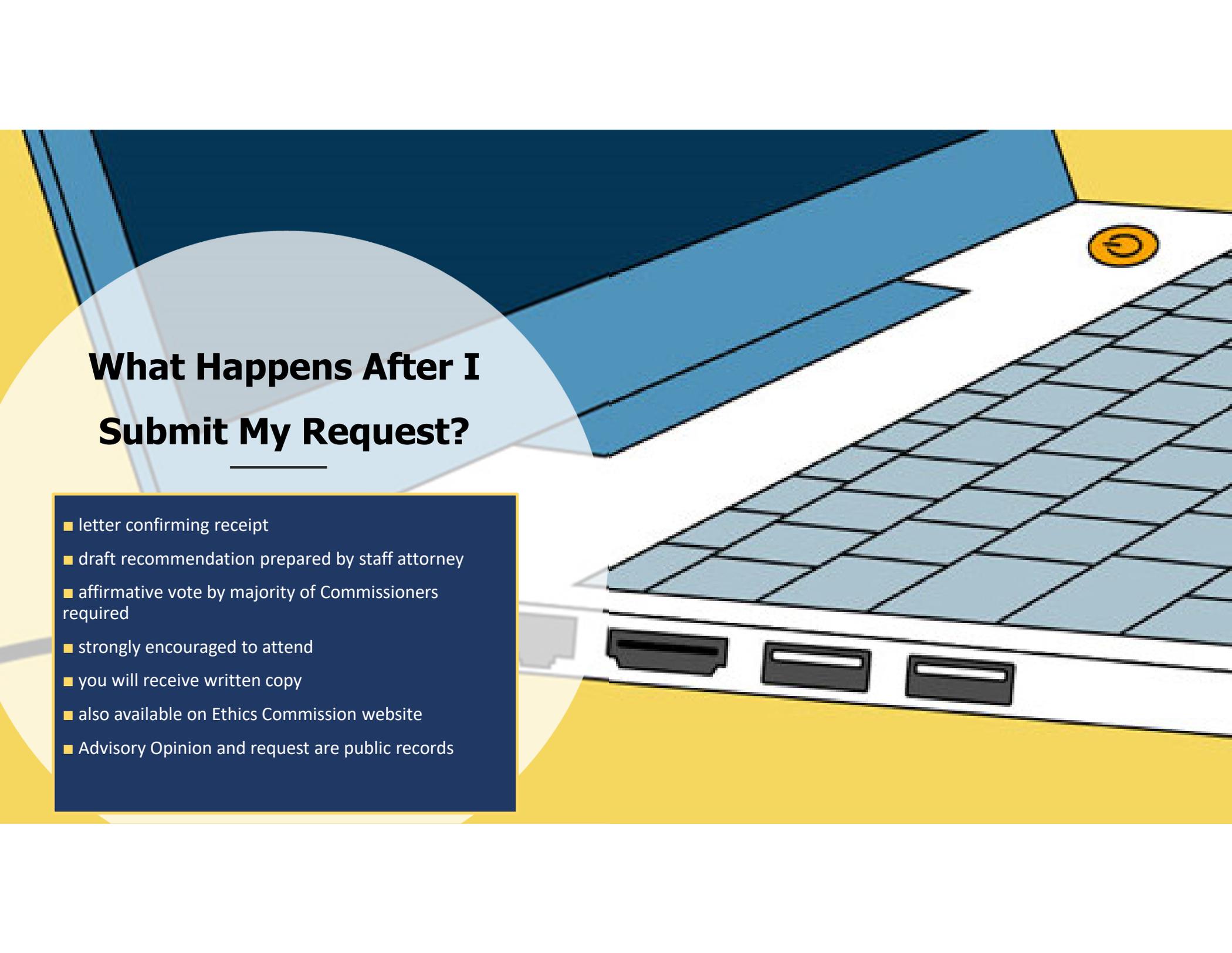
## Who May Request An Advisory Opinion?

- A person subject to the Code
- About a provision which may affect that person
- Before taking any official action

## How Do I Request An Advisory Opinion?

Mail, hand-deliver, or email to the Ethics Commission a letter containing your signature and the following information:

- ◆ name, telephone number, email address
- ◆ name, jurisdiction and powers of your agency, commission, or office
- ◆ official position & description of duties
- ◆ nature of the potential conflict
- ◆ summary of relevant facts
- ◆ any time constraints



## What Happens After I Submit My Request?

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- letter confirming receipt
- draft recommendation prepared by staff attorney
- affirmative vote by majority of Commissioners required
- strongly encouraged to attend
- you will receive written copy
- also available on Ethics Commission website
- Advisory Opinion and request are public records

# Who is required to file a Yearly Financial Statement?



All state elected officials

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All state appointed officials

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All state employees who hold a major decision-making position in a state agency

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All municipal elected officials

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Certain municipal appointed officials



# The Purpose of Financial Disclosure

- ▶ Help ensure that people who are acting in the public interest do not use their public positions to further their private financial interests
- ▶ Help identify any conflicts between an official's financial interests and his or her public office
- ▶ Increase overall transparency in government appointments and decision-making
- ▶ Help further the public's confidence in government



# RHODE ISLAND ETHICS COMMISSION

40 Fountain Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Providence, RI 02903

T: (401) 222-3790

F: (401) 222-3382

[ethics.email@ethics.ri.gov](mailto:ethics.email@ethics.ri.gov)

<https://ethics.ri.gov>

Monday through Friday  
8:30 am – 4:30 pm