

April 19, 2006

To All Interested Parties:

The Office of State Ethics (OSE) inherited a software system for online filing with which most of our registrants were quite familiar. The system was outdated and poorly maintained; circumstances that contributed to its disabling crash in December 2005. The nature of the system failure was such that it could not be repaired. The immediate effect of this was that the lobbyist filing forms due in early January 2006 had to be completed and logged entirely by hand – a process that no one involved desired.

Looking ahead, the Statements of Financial Interests for approximately 2,700 public officials and state employees, due May 1, 2006, will also have to be filed by hand. The OSE staff is aware of the inconvenience of this paper filing and has been diligently researching appropriate alternatives.

After weeks of research into the most efficient, cost-saving and time-sensitive methods of acquiring a new software/online filing system, the OSE concluded that a full Request for Proposals (RFP) process should be initiated immediately. To that end, OSE is already working with the Connecticut Department of Information Technology (DOIT) and will soon obtain an outside project manager to draft a comprehensive RFP.

The process demands a detailed analysis of our system requirements, the proper amount of time for the RFP to be published and subsequently returned by bidders, time for a thorough and responsible evaluation period, and finally, the vendor selection and contract negotiation. All of this will, of course, take time. Although we will do everything in our power to expedite the process, there is a likelihood that the online filing system will not be in place by the January 2007 lobbyist filing.

Our Online Filing System goals are as follows:

1. Develop a user-friendly, state-of-the-art system for online filing that can be modified to reflect future changes in the laws;
2. Acquire a working system at the most reasonable cost; and
3. Have the system thoroughly tested and functional at the earliest possible date.

The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board members along with the staff of the Office of State Ethics appreciate the continued patience and cooperation of public officials, the lobbying community and government employees. I would be happy to personally address any questions you may have regarding the project, and look forward to providing the registrants and the public with an enduring, first-rate system as the culmination of this process.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Bycel
Executive Director