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James C. Condos, Secretary of State
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I have just a few points to make that I hope the committee will consider as you finalize your work on this lobbyist bill. Some are technical changes, some are substance based – the latter are changes I touched on with the committee in earlier testimony.

- The first technical change that my office is looking for is a clarification to the definition of a contribution. At points in the Lobbyist chapter, in the context of the reporting of gifts to legislators or administrative officials, the term “political contribution” and “political campaign contribution” are used interchangeably. My office has had many questions regarding the meaning of these terms and whether there is any difference. The simple answer is that all contributions in chapter 17 should use the definition of contribution set forth under the campaign finance law (17 V.S.A. § 2103 “Definitions”):

(9) "Contribution" means a payment, distribution, advance, deposit, loan, or gift of anything of value, paid or promised to be paid (whether or not the promise is legally enforceable) to a person or political committee for the purpose of supporting or opposing one or more campaigns, but shall not include services provided without compensation by individuals volunteering their time on behalf of a candidate or political committee, nor bona fide commercial loans.

"Contribution" includes any transfer between committees or candidates. A contribution is deemed to be made on the date when any promise or pledge is made or when liability for anything of value is assumed.

- I commend the committee for looking to take up mass media reporting for lobbyists, lobbyist firms, and lobbyist employers during the biennium and my office would be happy to comply with this portion of the bill. As I hope you have experienced, the new system makes online reporting quick and easy. I also would like to thank Andy McLean for his testimony on the ease with which lobbyists could move to more regular reporting during the legislative cycle: I highly encourage the committee to include in this bill a change to have lobbyists and lobbyist employers report once a month during the session. I think this would provide the transparency the committee is looking for and the system we now have would not be overly burdensome for the lobbyists.
- Along with doing so, my office would like to request that a clear statement be made that all reports filed under this chapter (registrations, disclosures, and any new advertising reporting) shall be made digitally through the online system.

Lobbyist

Increase number of disclosures

- Current
 - Jan – Mar Report Due Apr 25
 - Apr – June Report Due Jul 25
 - Jun – Dec Report Due Jan 25
- Proposed
 - Jan Report Due Feb 15
 - Feb Report Due Mar 15
 - Mar Report Due Apr 15
 - Apr Report Due May 15
 - May Report Due Jun 15
 - Jun – Sep Report Due Oct 15
 - Oct – Dec Report Due Jan 15

Add Mass Media Disclosures Report Due within 48 hr – use the CF Mass Media definition.