

Governor Deval L. Patrick

Ethics Bill Signing

State House, Boston, MA

Wednesday, July 1, 2009

Integrity. Openness. Putting the public's interest first and foremost. These are the expectations that the public should have of the people who serve in government. The bill I sign today affirms those expectations.

This bill represents the most comprehensive improvement in our ethics, lobbying and campaign finance laws in a generation. Just to highlight a couple of the changes:

First, it clarifies the ethics and lobbying rules, including banning valuable gifts to elected officials, and increases the penalties for violating those rules.

Second, it gives enhanced authority to the State Ethics Commission, the Secretary of State and the Attorney General to enforce the rules more effectively.

Third, it requires training for government employees and lobbyists to ensure that everyone understands what the law expects of us – an important element of prevention.

And fourth, it provides even greater transparency to campaign fundraising.

There are many people to thank. The members of the Public Integrity Task Force, whose recommendations formed the basis for the bill we filed in January; the Speaker and Senate President for their leadership; Chairman Kocot and Chairman Berry of the Ethics Committee for their attention to detail; the conferees for their diligence; and all the members of the House and Senate for their unanimous support.

Every one of you contributed to getting this bill done and done right. But I would be remiss if I did not single out three true heroes of ethics reform.

- Ben Clements (for his skillful stewardship of the Task Force and pragmatic, fair-minded analysis of compromise language),
- Majority Leader Jim Vallee (for his tenacity and determination throughout), and
- the Speaker of the House Bob DeLeo (for his utter commitment to getting a bill that not only transformed the rules, but set a new tone for the work of Beacon Hill).

This is the third in a series of three reforms designed to fundamentally change the way Beacon Hill does business. Pension reform put an end to the gamesmanship and closed a number of nagging loopholes. Transportation reform radically simplifies and significantly professionalizes the transportation system. And now this ethics reform bill raises the level of expectation inside the building to what the public is entitled to expect of us. I am very proud of these

bills, and of the work we all did together to bring them to this fine result.

These reforms, along with a budget that is on-time, balanced and in partnership with the Legislature, demonstrate that we can successfully lead the Commonwealth through these difficult economic times. While many other states are in the midst of potential government shutdowns and protracted budget delays, residents of Massachusetts should feel good that their leaders are working together to change the status quo and lead us to a stronger future.