

GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC OFFICE HOLDERS DURING AN ELECTION

With the Saskatchewan general provincial election coming up in October 2024 some public office holders or sitting MLAs are either thinking of, or already have, a plan in place for their campaign.

DID YOU KNOW?

Once the Writ drops, regular MLAs are no longer considered public office holders. However, the Premier, Cabinet and their respective staffs still retain their public office holder designation.

If you currently work for the Government of Saskatchewan and take a leave of absence to run in the Provincial Election, you are still considered a public office holder for purposes of lobbying activities.

It is acceptable for lobbyists to lobby during the election period.

HOW CAN THIS AFFECT MY JOB IF ELECTED?

As a current, or perhaps continuing public office holder, it is important to understand how lobbying efforts during an election period can potentially put you in a conflict of interest situation. It is equally important to understand the rules that pertain to lobbyists during an election campaign.

LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

It is acceptable for lobbyists to lobby during an election period, but they must register their lobbying activities in the Saskatchewan Lobbyists Registry in accordance with the Act.

It is also acceptable for lobbyists to participate in political activities. However, these activities fall along a risk spectrum with some activities being higher risk than others for putting you in a real or perceived conflict of interest.

While lobbyists can contribute to your political campaign, display campaign signs and *attend* a fundraiser with little to no risk of a conflict, other activities may put you in a real or perceived conflict of interest.

Activities such as serving on your campaign team, *organizing* a political fundraiser, preparing advertising or communication plans or providing other services are all higher risk activities that

have the potential to put you in a conflict of interest if the lobbyist is currently lobbying or lobbies you once (re)elected.

Lobbyists who actively canvass on your behalf, act as scrutineers or have significant interaction with a public office holder/member during an election campaign may also give rise to the perception of a conflict if they continue to lobby that same Member once he/she is (re)elected.

Similarly, if you are thinking of appointing someone to your transition team, remember that those who work with a member on a transition team are prohibited from lobbying for 6 months after the transition period ends. This is important information to impart to anyone you are considering for your transition team as it affects their employment opportunities after their term with you has ended.

It is important to note that it is the public office holder that feels the repercussions, usually in a public manner, of real or perceived conflicts of interest.

The Conflict of Interest Commissioner website also contains important information for Candidates Seeking Election. That information can be found at

<https://www.saskcoic.ca/publications/bulletins/>

If you are unsure if a lobbyist should be communicating with you, or would like clarification on a specific circumstance, please do not hesitate to contact the Conflict of Interest Commissioner/Registrar of Lobbyists.

www.sasklobbyistregistry.ca

info@sasklobbyistregistry.ca

306-787-0800