

# Comparing State Ethics Laws and Ethics Trends and Issues

By David E. Freel

*The difficulty in drawing meaningful comparisons and identifying trends in standards created as a remedy to ethics concerns within the states is compounded by significant differences in the manner in which jurisdictions define “ethics” and regulate oversight. Conflicts of interest related to gifts and gratuities, and arising from family and unique private sector relationships, represent continuing ethics trends across the nation.*

## Introduction—

### Difficulty of Comparison Among the States

Drawing general comparisons or identifying trends among the responses of the states to any significant public policy issue is often difficult. Comparisons aimed at readily classifying or categorizing standards of conduct or noteworthy ethics developments throughout the country are no less challenging.

As ethics comparisons or trends are summarized to generalizations, all too often they are misleading or incorrect. Apart from differences in demographics, summaries commonly fail to explain legislative, regional, political, or jurisdictional factors or variations that bring about change or reconsideration. Ethics oversight presents a unique set of issues, or family compound the attempt at simplifying comparison.

Attempting to do exactly this—to compare statutes and identify ethical trends in this summary—it is helpful to understand why categorical assessments of ethics oversight or precedent among states are particularly hard.

### Uniqueness of Ethics Governance Approaches

Ethics oversight varies dramatically throughout the states. From the extent of conduct or persons subject to the definition of “ethics” within a state or region, to the nature of sanctions imposed upon those violating ethics standards, restrictions upon the conduct of public officials that extend beyond baseline public protections against bribery or theft vary significantly from state to state, and at times, even within the same state. As an example of the difficulty, a recent survey conducted in 2002 concluded that almost all states have some minimal legislative gift or gratuity restriction. However, the survey noted the wide variety of standards governing gifts and the challenge of comparative analysis.

In fact, of the 50 states, there are at least 42 who usually have some structure of ethical protections to the public that limit the actions or activities of specified officials.<sup>3</sup> Beyond the number of jurisdictions with ethics laws or standards, a range of factors exists that the observer must contemplate in attempting to evaluate general similarities or evolving trends in ethics oversight. These issues are fundamental to any effective comparison of ethics restrictions.

### Ethics—What Does it Address?

In many jurisdictions, “ethics” describes standards of official conduct. These standards are often statutory and commonly involve issues of financial conflicts of interest. In addition, at least 27 states that have ethics oversight also administer some form of personal (as opposed to campaign contribution or campaign finance) financial disclosure. Initially a postwar phenomenon, jurisdictions largely began enacting ethics laws in 1973, often legislating standards of conduct together with the requirement to provide some level of personal financial disclosure. This was done in an effort to require the identification of, and then protect the larger public against, conflicts of interest likely to be inherent within ordinary personal financial interests or family or business relationships of a governing official. Some states refer to this type of disclosure as a financial disclosure statement (e.g. Delaware), others refer to it as a statement of economic interests (e.g. Alabama). Both in part, to contrast the disclosure required in contrast to various types of campaign finance reporting. Disclosure may apply to a number of classes of public officials such as political subdivisions or governmental agencies, or to a more limited class of executive branch officials, such as in Louisiana. The extent of disclosure can also vary greatly. At least 22 of the 27 states that combine conflict of interest and disclosure into a specific system of ethics oversight also include lobbyist regulation. (This can be significant to the observer because re-

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restrictions on gift giving or the description of such as vendors, consultants, lobbyists or those per-  
cific level or type of gratuities, for example, forming some governmental function.  
found within lobbyist restrictions, or some other. While some states have apparently chosen uniform  
of regulation, rather than solely within ethics standards for all those in public service, whether  
utes statutory restrictions in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While one or more oversight bodies, others have  
sin provide examples. Lobbyist restrictions limited the application of ethics statutes to one class  
also overlap standards of conduct. A minimum of public officials. Some serving at  
states incorporate some responsibility for campaign finance, believing that a single standard does not ad-  
finance or campaign conduct governance with the differences in authority or compensation or  
responsibility of their ethics boards, commission comparative constituent responsibility. However the  
administrative structure. At least eight states participate, one area where a wide divergence of stan-  
a “one-stop shop” of public sector oversight, and exists among and within the states is in gift or  
subject matter responsibilities over ethics, disclosure restrictions.  
campaign finance, and lobbying activities placed in  
one entity

### Underlying Jurisdiction

One benefit of a generally inclusive model. A third question important to understanding simi-  
be the convenience to the public of having a central or trends is the source of underlying over-  
entity examine or provide advice in response to the jurisdiction. Many states have created boards  
tions involving a broad spectrum of issues or commissions as statutory enactments. A number  
as having ethical implications. Other states have states such as Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and T  
parently shied away from a concentration of responsibility. They have either opted to form them by constitutional mandate. California’s  
sibility in one entity. They have either opted to form them by constitutional mandate. California’s  
egate oversight by subject matter. Fair Political Practices Commission was created by  
limited number of functions to their ethics entity. Initiative through state proposition and has a  
within their statutory scheme. mandated minimum budget.

### Those Subject to Ethics Restrictions

A second concern that arises in trying to complete public interest. Despite constitutional over-  
ethics statutes is the definition of the class of these entities have also faced questions regard-  
subject to the framework of statutes or regulations. Some states, such as Alabama, Massachusetts, Ohio, legislatures, or administrative budgeting  
and Pennsylvania, subject an entire population of these.  
those in public service, at both the state and local  
levels, to a uniform statewide standard of authority.

### Authority

States such as Indiana, New Jersey and North Carolina. A fourth issue that makes the comparison of states  
lina, subject only state employees to oversight. Other difficult with respect to ethics laws, is the type  
ers, such as Michigan and Illinois, address only ethics statutes or regulations themselves—whether  
ecutive branch officials. Some states subject judicial, and/or administrative in remedy  
or legislative officials to ethical governance, under combination thereof—and other differences in  
professional codes of conduct or ethical policies, authority. Massachusetts and Maryland are ex-  
ther in addition to state laws, or in lieu of them. Examples of states with statutes with civil sanction,  
En states place oversight involving all of these. Pennsylvania and Ohio have statutes that have  
governed by their standards in one. Other potential criminal enforcement. Those states having  
states may divide responsibility for legislators, a judgment of executive governance at the state level  
and executive branch officials upon theoretical. One solely on administrative application or employ-  
interpretive views of constitutional or statutory. Some sanction of their provisions. Examples of these  
ration of powers within the three branches, Kentucky include Indiana and Michigan.  
Ohio and Wilmington are examples. These states have among specific aspects of authority power  
created ethical oversight bodies for officials. They may or may not include compulsory processes to  
legislative, judicial, and executive branches. Such information such as subpoena. Authority  
therefore have a minimum of three different. This has led to a continuing debate over a number of years  
agencies. Important ethical restrictions in at least regarding whether an entity may self-initiate com-  
19 states extend to persons outside the public sector or is dependent upon sworn or formal com-

plaint processes to initiate investigations or Buffalo, Chicago, Denver, Honolulu, Los Angeles, nations into wrongdoing. In addition, some of the New York City, Oakland, San Antonio, San Diego, entities have advisory remedies or educational San Francisco and Seattle. City entities have often responsibilities unique to their authority developed or matured in jurisdictions without state-

While a state chooses a preferred mechanism for ethics oversight, each model has potential positive and negative attributes. Civil or administrative standards may be simpler to administer or test for compliance. However, civil fines or employment sanctions may not be viewed as having sufficient “teeth” to respond to public concern regarding egregious ethical misconduct. A criminal standard may be viewed as more responsive to those concerns, as a deterrent to serious unethical activity, or perhaps, more protective against indiscriminate allegations of wrongdoing. However, criminal enforcement requires a more exacting commitment to statutory drafting, factual evidence and process. Those states that have enabled education and advisory missions within their oversight structures, in addition to compliance and enforcement mechanisms, appear to have recognized that attempts to regulate unethical conduct require some interpretive and informational components to fully and effectively implement an oversight structure.

**Composition of Oversight Structure**

One final factor that should be taken into consideration in the comparison of ethics standards is the composition and authority of the body given oversight. In states with purely executive governance it is often a single office holder or cabinet-level subordinate who must administer the ethical standards. In many states, it is a board or commission bodies vary in composition and authority are composed only of appointed members, with types of qualifying criteria and appointment processes. Some are composed of elected office exclusively and others combine both. Some must be bipartisan, some non-partisan; others constituted with an even number of members, some have an odd number of members.

Each governance makeup may have historical roots of a particular institution, office, or office holder. But cross-comparisons of caseloads, findings, or even the subject matter of ethical issues, are dependent upon these or other unique attributes.

**Municipal and Local Ethics Bodies**

The concept of legislating ethical norms and conditions argued to be in the public interest is not a province of the states, and exists as well in political subdivisions. At least 11 major cities adopted municipal ethics agencies. These

developed or matured in jurisdictions without state-wide oversight, as in Colorado. In fact, on May 6, 2003, 80 percent of Denver voters passed a charter amendment enhancing existing ethics ordinances and requiring a code of ethics and advisory board. Other municipal remedies have evolved within states having ethics statutes, such as those in major cities in California. Often the test of statewide oversight includes an examination of whether local ethical standards are as demanding as those of the state. This extent of ethical restrictions can become important to the state and municipality. It has for Illinois and Chicago. The Chicago Board of Ethics has existed since 1987. Illinois, in contrast, adopted ethics oversight on December 9, 2003, in the wake of a series of state scandals.

A growing number of counties or local political subdivisions have created ethics oversight that can also be influential to any state discussion. For example, readers may quickly recognize national attention to tragic events in 2003 involving the sniper shootings in Maryland. As one of a growing number of county or regional ethics entities, the Montgomery County Ethics Commission subsequently became deeply embroiled in ethical concerns involving the former chief of police that largely arose from potential compensation provided to him from private sources for publication or movie rights describing his public role in the successful apprehension of the sniper.

**National or International Influences**

While the focus of this article is upon the states, ethics enactments have been and will continue to be influenced by ethical questions resonating within a state, remedial legislation or oversight improvements can be swayed by events beyond state borders. A variety of federal institutions and cabinet departments have entities to address ethical issues, chief among them the Office of Governmental Ethics (OGE) in the executive branch. In 2003, OGE proposed significant legislative revisions to Congress that it described as efforts to simplify financial disclosure mandates imposed upon executive branch appointees and employees.<sup>15</sup>

Disseminated territories and protectorates, such as Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands, have ethics agencies. So does the sovereign Navajo Indian Nation. The reader believe ethics oversight to be

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unique to those in public sector service in the United States, the provinces of Canada and the governments in a number of Western countries, as well as developing democracies, have examined or are examining various forms of ethics oversight that go beyond baseline protections to the public trust. In 2003, the former Canadian provinces often utilize a legislative appointed ethics officer as the responsible official. In December of 2003, the new prime minister of Canada announced proposals for the appointment of a permanent ethics counselor by parliament and to enhance federal oversight in response to ethical questions involving the administration of his predecessor. Some, in observance of enhanced federal guidelines in the United States courts in the 1990s, recent unethical activity within the sector on Wall Street, or the implementation of the Sarbanes Oxley Act of 2003 as a remedial measure may also look to those or other events and trends to attempt to regulate unethical action.

### Trends—Gifts and Gratuities

During 2003, the issue of gifts and gratuities trended throughout the states. Whether pocketbook issues for consumers and voters or solely issues of local government, the question of those doing business with government, and those in government accepting travel, lodging or other things of value, resounded within the states in 2003.

At least four different states struggled with ethical questions involving gifts within the higher levels of the executive branch, the governor, Connecticut, Illinois and Wisconsin all addressed en-gagements or findings involving prohibited gifts or payments and costs of receptions where all members or persons having interests before the state General Assembly are invited to the reception. Three of the four cases entail corruption issues, including the alleged inadequacy of the closure by the governor.

In Wisconsin, the former governor paid forfeitures totalling \$13,500 for improper use of state airplane and improper acceptance of the loan of a boat.

Arkansas, litigation over gifts and disclosure by the governor continues into 2004, and in 2003, his constitutional vagueness challenge to the gift standard and its interpretation by the Arkansas Ethics Commission.

In Connecticut, at the end of 2003, the *Times* called for the resignation of the current governor for his admission that he had not fully disclosed

of gift giving by those doing business with his administration. This admission came after the governor entered into an earlier joint stipulation in 2003 with the Connecticut State Ethics Commission in which he acknowledged the acceptance of \$10,000 in vacation lodging in Illinois, the former governor was indicted by a U.S. Attorney on criminal charges stemming from gifts and vacations allegedly given to him, and alleged contract steering and gratuities issues have been prominent in a number of jurisdictions at other levels of the government. On May 12, 2003, the Massachusetts Ethics Commission issued a decision and order involving the Life Insurance Association of Massachusetts (LIAM), finding violations of the state conflict of interest provision of meals to the former LIAM and fined LIAM \$4,000. The measure signified the commission's reconsideration of its gratuities restrictions on direction of the Massachusetts Supreme Court as presenting similar issues and statutory language to federal statutes successfully challenged before the U.S. Supreme Court in an earlier decision on gratuities involving former Secretary of Agriculture Michael Espy. Oregon appears to have bucked the general con-trend toward more limited and/or increased disclosure of gifts. In amendments in August-2003 creating new exceptions to their ethics law, the Oregon Legislative Assembly amended Oregon Revised Code Section 244.020(8)(d) to exempt from the definition of a gift "the giving or receiving of an unlimited amount of food and beverage for the public official and the relative of the public official, provided that the food or beverage is provided in the presence of the public official also engaged on exception from its gift ban in 2003 for the payment and costs of receptions where all members of the General Assembly are invited to attend. In Iowa, the sponsors of a re-ception in comparison to Oregon, the sponsors of a re-ception in Iowa must file a report disclosing the costs of the reception.

### Misuse of Public Position

The Kentucky Executive Branch Ethics Commission brought charges against their former governor in 2003, which he ultimately admitted, for violating the conflict of interest restrictions and alleged misuse of his office to benefit a businesswoman with whom he had an alleged relationship. The Ohio Ethics

were attributed to the costs of exclusive golf outings and the misuse of state-paid long distance tele- and free lodging, by the former executive director and other public resources in the conduct of a the state's School Facilities Commission from private consulting business related to the work of the tractors competing for \$3 billion in school construction.

tions contracts awarded for school reconstruction efforts throughout the state. In 2002, the Ohio Ethics Commission had forwarded analogous questions of conflict of interest and non-disclosure involving

of conflict of interest and non-disclosure involving of interest restraints for some time. Of note over \$1,400 worth of gift receipt by the former executive director of the Ohio Ethics Commission on door or post-employment provisions are the 2003 efforts of the King County Board of Ethics in Washington. Having examined similar enactments throughout the county King County adopted sub-

**Nepotism**

The relationship of family or those in close proximity to the office holder is a continuing trend in ethics. Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oklahoma and New York City all recorded a variety of enforcement cases in 2003 involving actions by public officials or employees benefiting family members close to the office. Oklahoma, consistent with the trend of extending ethics restrictions into issues of those related to the office holder, expanded those included within the definition of family to a child, adopted child, stepchild, or spouse of a legislator or statewide elective.

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One challenge on the horizon for states is the impact of budget cuts on the horizon for states. While the closeness of relationships to a public official as a matter of conflicting interests, is not only presented in personnel areas of hiring, benefits, retirement, domestic partner relationships. In contrast, while California faced significant and notable budget reductions in 2003, the budget of the California Fair Political Practices Commission is fixed by proposition and contains an annual cost-of-the misuse of public resources. The Florida Ethics Commission entered into a stipulated agreement providing for a \$10,000 fine and public censure of employees of the Correctional Privatization Commission.

**Conflict of Interest**

The application of ethics statutes to new unique non-profit and private sector relationships involving public sector governance is a trend Delaware wrestled in 2002 and 2003 with questions of the intersection of cabinet responsibilities those on the cabinet simultaneously serving on the board of trustees of a charter school involving alleged misconduct of trustees within public employees retirement systems.

As Florida experienced, these issues can involve traditional questions of conflicting interests and the misuse of public resources. The Florida Ethics Commission entered into a stipulated agreement providing for a \$10,000 fine and public censure of employees of the Correctional Privatization Commission.

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While by no means a trend, Nevada took an interesting approach to the operating budget of its ethics agency, the Nevada Commission on Ethics. By enacting AB 551, effective on July 1, 2003, Nevada provides that county and city governments with populations over 10,000 must share the costs of operation of the commission on a percentage basis related to the number of opinion requests made, 65 percent of which were found to emanate locally. Only time will determine whether requiring those seeking advice, rather than the entire state, to directly pay for ethics consultation will undermine or generally discourage efforts to encourage ethical guidance before officials act.

Forced budget reevaluation or resolution may have other broader results in ethics. Policy New York City Conflicts of Interest Board adopted Advisory Opinion 2003-4 on the issue of fundraising<sup>3</sup> in 2003. The board held that city officials would not violate the conflict of interest restrictions by engaging in targeted fundraising solicitations, and untargeted solicitations in certain situations, of persons having interests before the city where the funds support the city's purposes and interests of the city not-for-profit entity pre-certified by the board. The Connecticut State Ethics Commission issued Advisory Opinion 2003-2, in the wake of substantial layoffs, finding that a state agency could fund the continuation of a position through contributions from entities doing business with the agency qualifying as statutory gifts to the state.<sup>4</sup> That opinion requires the funded public servant to refrain from taking any official action that could affect his benefactor or competing to his benefactor.

### Information Systems

Despite funding reductions, many states and ethics agencies have been innovators in the use of technology to increase efficiency and improve operations. Indiana, Massachusetts, New State, New York City, Pennsylvania and South Carolina all reported significant increases in the efficiency of process through online administration of disclosure and other information system enhancements. Software in many states now allow users to search for advisory or published enforcement precedents by names or subject matter, offering both those in the regulated community of public officials, and the greater public, the advantage of easily locating ethics guidance.

Ethics entities are increasingly utilizing online access to provide educational and training opportunities for those governed by ethical standards. Most ethics agencies offer online educational materials

found on their websites. New York State, the Chicago Ethics Board, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture all feature online training videos, modules or testing.

### Additional Resources

While comparisons or trend issues are difficult to readily identify among the states, there are resources for general assistance. COGEL conducts annual surveys in the topic areas of ethics, lobbying, campaign finance, public records and electronic filing. COGEL membership includes many of those responsible for ethics administration in all three branches of government, at the national, state, provincial and local levels in the United States and Canada, as well as a growing number of other countries. COGEL also includes professionals, academics and individuals practicing or interested in these areas. These surveys summarize the authority and enforcement, as well as advisory enforcement, and legislative developments, of individual states and other jurisdictions. *Ethics Update* this year is available on searchable CD, and has included the identification of the issue or development that the ethics agency itself classifies as a year's most significant. Surveys are available to members, and to the public for a modest fee. COGEL website at [www.cogel.org](http://www.cogel.org).

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For those who seek to mine a definitive comparison within any state or jurisdiction, whether taken from this article or another summary, the author advises the reader to highlight the specific change or trend concern, and then conduct research specifically within the jurisdiction, including contact with more than one knowledgeable resource within that state or region. While comparisons drawn in this article come largely from summaries prepared by those agencies or individual offices charged with ethics oversight, and are often, in the author's experience, the most accurate, an agency's oversight alone may color the perception and description of the issue. For purposes of organizing this summary, the author's own identification of classifications of trends may also diverge from the category in which others identify those identical questions.

<sup>2</sup> See *BGA Integrity Index*, (Better Government Association 2002), 24, relying on data from the Center For Public Integrity State Project, [www.publicintegrity.org](http://www.publicintegrity.org); also note the annual updates published by the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL) described at the article's end and available through [www.cogel.org](http://www.cogel.org).

<sup>3</sup> COGEL's tables, taken from the 2003 COGEL *Ethics Update*, are found at the end of this article and summarize the authority and enforcement, as well as advisory enforcement, and legislative developments, of individual states and other jurisdictions. *Ethics Update* this year is available on searchable CD, and has included the identification of the issue or development that the ethics agency itself classifies as a year's most significant. Surveys are available to members, and to the public for a modest fee. COGEL website at [www.cogel.org](http://www.cogel.org).

eral tables are compiled, a small number of jurisdictions that have ethics laws do not, and are not listed.)

<sup>4</sup> Delaware Code, Title 29, Chapter 58, Section 5812.

<sup>5</sup> Code of Alabama, Chapter 25 of Title 36, Section 36-25-14, 1975.

<sup>6</sup> Ohio Ethics Law, Revised Code Sections 102.02, and Ohio Administrative Rules.

<sup>7</sup> Louisiana Revised Statutes, Code of Governmental Ethics, Chapter 15, Section 1114.

<sup>8</sup> In Minnesota, [www.cfboard.state.mn.us/giftban.htm](http://www.cfboard.state.mn.us/giftban.htm); in Wisconsin, <http://ethics.state.wi.us/Forms-Publications/Guidelines/510-3Rs.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Gift limits in California are biennially adjusted based upon the Consumer Price Index by the California Fair Practices Commission, [www.fppc.ca.gov/index.html?ID=52&tr\\_id=/legal/regs/18940-2.htm](http://www.fppc.ca.gov/index.html?ID=52&tr_id=/legal/regs/18940-2.htm).

<sup>10</sup> California Governmental Code, Title 9, Chapter 3, Section 83122, [www.fppc.ca.gov/Act/2003Act.PDF](http://www.fppc.ca.gov/Act/2003Act.PDF).

<sup>11</sup> City of Denver Charter, Section 1.2.9.

<sup>12</sup> [www.ci.chi.il.us/Ethics/pdf/2003AnnualReport.pdf](http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Ethics/pdf/2003AnnualReport.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Illinois Public Act 093-0617; see also, [www.legis.state.il.us/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=093-0617](http://www.legis.state.il.us/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=093-0617).

<sup>14</sup> [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Content/ethics/docs/moose\\_agreement.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Content/ethics/docs/moose_agreement.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> [www.usoge.gov/pages/forms\\_pubs\\_otherdocs/fpo\\_files/proposed\\_legsltn/ega\\_amends\\_07\\_16\\_03.pdf](http://www.usoge.gov/pages/forms_pubs_otherdocs/fpo_files/proposed_legsltn/ega_amends_07_16_03.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> [www.pm.gc.ca/eng/eth\\_conduct.asp](http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/eth_conduct.asp).

<sup>17</sup> [http://ethics.state.wi.us/NewsAndNotices/Settlement\\_McCallum.pdf](http://ethics.state.wi.us/NewsAndNotices/Settlement_McCallum.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Declaratory Judgement and Petition for Review complaint, *Huckabee v. Kearney and Sloan*, Pulaski County Circuit Court Case No. CV-2003-1829.

<sup>19</sup> Stipulation and Order, Docket No. 2003-5, [www.ethics.state.ct.us/Press\\_Releases/Rowland\\_Press\\_Release.htm](http://www.ethics.state.ct.us/Press_Releases/Rowland_Press_Release.htm).

[www.usdoj.gov/usao/iln/pr/2003/pr121703\\_01.pdf](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/iln/pr/2003/pr121703_01.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> [www.state.ma.us/ethics/ENFORCEMENTACTIONS.htm#LIAM](http://www.state.ma.us/ethics/ENFORCEMENTACTIONS.htm#LIAM).

<sup>21</sup> *United States v. Sun-Diamond Growers of California*, 526 U.S.398, (1999).

<sup>22</sup> Section 68B.22,(4), new paragraph (r) of the Iowa Code. [www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,103280,00.html](http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,103280,00.html).

<sup>23</sup> <http://ethics.ohio.gov/PressReleases/07092003.html>.

<sup>24</sup> <http://ethics.ohio.gov/PressReleases/08072002.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Section 257:1-1-1 et seq. of the Rules of the Oklahoma Ethics Commission, 74 O.S.Supp.2002, Ch. 62, App.

<sup>26</sup> [www.ethics.state.la.us/laws/2003legsum.htm](http://www.ethics.state.la.us/laws/2003legsum.htm).

<sup>27</sup> [www.state.de.us/pic/annual03.pdf](http://www.state.de.us/pic/annual03.pdf), Advisory Opinion 2-23 in Appendix B therein.

<sup>28</sup> [www.enquirer.com/editions/2003/10/19/loc\\_oh-pension.html](http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2003/10/19/loc_oh-pension.html).

<sup>29</sup> [www.ethics.state.fl.us/](http://www.ethics.state.fl.us/), Advisory Opinion 03-10

<sup>30</sup> [www.metrokc.gov/ethics/](http://www.metrokc.gov/ethics/).

<sup>31</sup> <http://search.citylaw.org/isysquery/irlld/2/doc>.

<sup>32</sup> [www.ethics.state.ct.us/Advisory\\_Opinions/2003/2003\\_2.htm](http://www.ethics.state.ct.us/Advisory_Opinions/2003/2003_2.htm).

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### About the Author

**David E. Freel** has been the executive director of the Ohio Ethics Commission since 1994. Before joining the Ethics Commission staff, he was a faculty member of the Ohio State University College of Law. Freel has written articles on Ohio's Ethics Law and given ethics presentations at seminars and conferences in the United States and Canada. He is a past president of the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL) and was honored with the COGEL Service Award in 2002.

9. Ethics precedes action, the law follows it. 10. The law is universally accepted within its jurisdiction and is enforceable, whereas ethics is not always universally accepted and is not enforceable by force or pressure. 11. Law prescribes punishments for illegal acts, whereas ethics do not clearly prescribe specific punishments for an unethical act, since the outcome of an unethical act is not always clear. Laws merely provide us with the guidelines of behaviour for a disciplined, peaceful and safe society. Law and ethics combine to define how individuals choose to interact with one another. COMPILED BY ALBERT OWUSU TAGOE Nanaowusu2002@yahoo.com. Note that some pieces of information presented here were picked from other publications. Laws and ethics differ in that. Nature of professional ethics in counseâ€¦ Counselor who is counseling a client plâ€¦ Principle ethics ask "what should I do?â€¦ Laws dictate minimum standards of behavior that society will tâ€¦ Because there are few absolute right answers to ethical questiâ€¦ Sacrificing fidelity in order to be truthful. "Who should I be?" Laws and ethics differ in that.Â issuing licenses and regulating interstate. protect members of society from harmful acts of others, includâ€¦ What do you call laws enacted by stateâ€¦ statutes. The President of the US exercises limitâ€¦ executive orders. 130 terms. Larry\_Snyder. Med Law and Ethics. Ethics and law are inextricably linked in modern society, and many legal decisions arise from the interpretation of various ethical issues. Artificial intelligence adds a new dimension to these questions. Systems that use artificial intelligence technologies are becoming increasingly autonomous in terms of the complexity of the tasks they can perform, their potential impact on the world and the diminishing ability of humans to understand, predict and control their functioning. Most people underestimate the real level of automation of these systems, which have the ability to learn from their ow Ethics in the public sector is a broad topic that is usually considered a branch of political ethics. In the public sector, ethics addresses the fundamental premise of a public administrator's duty as a "steward" to the public. In other words, it is the moral justification and consideration for decisions and actions made during the completion of daily duties when working to provide the general services of government and nonprofit organizations. Ethics is defined as, among others, the entirety of rules