

CHAPTER 2023-121

Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 199

An act relating to ethics requirements for officers and employees of special tax districts; amending s. 112.313, F.S.; specifying that certain conduct by certain public officers and employees is deemed a conflict of interest; making technical changes; amending s. 112.3142, F.S.; requiring certain ethics training for elected local officers of independent special districts beginning on a specified date; specifying requirements for such training; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (7) of section 112.313, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

112.313 Standards of conduct for public officers, employees of agencies, and local government attorneys.—

(7) CONFLICTING EMPLOYMENT OR CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP.—

(a) No public officer or employee of an agency shall have or hold any employment or contractual relationship with any business entity or any agency which is subject to the regulation of, or is doing business with, an agency of which he or she is an officer or employee, excluding those organizations and their officers who, when acting in their official capacity, enter into or negotiate a collective bargaining contract with the state or any municipality, county, or other political subdivision of the state; nor shall an officer or employee of an agency have or hold any employment or contractual relationship that will create a continuing or frequently recurring conflict between his or her private interests and the performance of his or her public duties or that would impede the full and faithful discharge of his or her public duties.

1. When the agency referred to is that certain kind of special tax district created by general or special law and is limited specifically to constructing, maintaining, managing, and financing improvements in the land area over which the agency has jurisdiction, or when the agency has been organized pursuant to chapter 298, then employment with, or entering into a contractual relationship with, such business entity by a public officer or employee of such agency ~~is shall~~ not be prohibited by this subsection or be deemed a conflict per se. However, conduct by such officer or employee that is prohibited by, or otherwise frustrates the intent of, this section, including conduct that violates subsections (6) and (8), is shall be deemed a conflict of interest in violation of the standards of conduct set forth by this section.

2. When the agency referred to is a legislative body and the regulatory power over the business entity resides in another agency, or when the regulatory power which the legislative body exercises over the business entity or agency is strictly through the enactment of laws or ordinances, then employment or a contractual relationship with such business entity by a public officer or employee of a legislative body shall not be prohibited by this subsection or be deemed a conflict.

(b) This subsection shall not prohibit a public officer or employee from practicing in a particular profession or occupation when such practice by persons holding such public office or employment is required or permitted by law or ordinance.

Section 2. Paragraphs (d) and (e) of subsection (2) of section 112.3142, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as paragraphs (e) and (f), respectively, present paragraph (e) of that subsection is amended, and a new paragraph (d) is added to that subsection, to read:

112.3142 Ethics training for specified constitutional officers, elected municipal officers, ~~and commissioners of community redevelopment agencies, and elected local officers of independent special districts.~~—

(2)

(d) Beginning January 1, 2024, each elected local officer of an independent special district, as defined in s. 189.012, and each person who is appointed to fill a vacancy for an unexpired term of such elective office must complete 4 hours of ethics training each calendar year which addresses, at a minimum, s. 8, Art. II of the State Constitution, the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees, and the public records and public meetings laws of this state. This requirement may be satisfied by completion of a continuing legal education class or other continuing professional education class, seminar, or presentation, if the required subject matter is covered by such class, seminar, or presentation.

(f)(e) The Legislature intends that a constitutional officer, ~~or~~ elected municipal officer, ~~or~~ elected local officer of an independent special district who is required to complete ethics training pursuant to this section receive the required training as close as possible to the date that he or she assumes office. A constitutional officer, ~~or~~ elected municipal officer, ~~or~~ elected local officer of an independent special district assuming a new office or new term of office on or before March 31 must complete the annual training on or before December 31 of the year in which the term of office began. A constitutional officer, ~~or~~ elected municipal officer, ~~or~~ elected local officer of an independent special district assuming a new office or new term of office after March 31 is not required to complete ethics training for the calendar year in which the term of office began.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.

Approved by the Governor May 24, 2023.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 24, 2023.