

Date of Hearing: April 15, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS
Gail Pellerin, Chair
AB 2592 (Pacheco) – As Amended March 19, 2026

SUBJECT: Lobbyist training.

SUMMARY: Transfers responsibility for lobbyist ethics training from the Assembly and Senate Legislative Ethics Committees to the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), beginning in 2029. Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Requires the FPPC, beginning in 2029, to maintain a training course for registered lobbyists on ethical issues and laws relating to lobbying, and on the Legislature's policies against harassment, including sexual harassment, in connection with lobbying activities. Requires the FPPC to consult with the Assembly and Senate Legislative Ethics Committees in developing the course curriculum. Requires the course to be available on-demand through an online platform, internet webpage, or application.
- 2) Permits the FPPC to impose a \$50 fee per lobbyist for taking the training course. Requires the FPPC to adjust that fee for inflation in every odd-numbered year, rounded to the nearest \$10.
- 3) Repeals, effective 2029, a requirement for the Assembly and Senate Legislative Ethics Committees to conduct, at least semiannually, a training course for registered lobbyists on ethical issues and laws related to lobbying, in consultation with the FPPC, and to impose fees to fund that lobbyist training.
- 4) Requires funds collected by the Assembly and Senate Legislative Ethics Committees from lobbyist training that are unused before January 1, 2029, to be transferred to the FPPC for the purpose of developing its lobbyist training course.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Creates the FPPC, and makes it responsible for the impartial, effective administration and implementation of the Political Reform Act (PRA). (Government Code §§83100, 83111)
- 2) Requires the appropriate legislative ethics committees of each house of the Legislature to conduct, at least semiannually, an orientation course on the relevant ethical issues and laws related to lobbying, in consultation with the FPPC. Requires the course to include information on each house of the Legislature's policies against harassment, including sexual harassment, in connection with lobbying activities. Requires the committees to impose fees on lobbyists for attending this course, and requires the fees to be set at an amount to enable the lobbyist's participation to be funded from those fees to the fullest extent possible. (Government Code §8956)
- 3) Requires lobbyists to attend an ethics training course at least once during each two-year legislative session as a condition of registering as a lobbyist. (Government Code §86103)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

1) Purpose of the Bill: According to the author:

Lobbyist training currently is handled by legislative ethics staff during one of the busiest times of year, creating an unnecessary strain on limited resources.

AB 2592 transfers this responsibility to the California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) – the state’s primary authority on political ethics and the agency responsible for interpreting and enforcing the state’s lobbying laws. Because the FPPC already advises lobbyists and maintains up-to-date guidance, it is best positioned to provide accurate, standardized training that reflects current law. This change will streamline the process, improve access through on-demand training, and allow legislative staff to focus on their core responsibilities.

2) Lobbyist Ethics Training Overview: SB 1738 (Roberti), Chapter 84, Statutes of 1990, also known as the “Ethics in Government Act of 1990,” enacted a comprehensive ethics reform package. Among other provisions, SB 1738 required legislators, designated employees of the Legislature, and lobbyists to take periodic ethics orientation courses, conducted by the legislative ethics committees in the Assembly and Senate. According to prior legislative analyses, the FPPC supported the initial provision giving the legislative ethics committees, rather than the FPPC, responsibility for conducting lobbyist ethics training.

State law requires that the training be offered at least semiannually, and the ethics committees generally have held the training with greater frequency. According to information from the Senate Committee on Legislative Ethics, the committees typically offer 16 lobbyist training sessions per two year legislative session, including 11 sessions prior to the June 30 deadline for lobbyists to renew their certification in the first year of the legislative session, 2 additional training sessions in the summer and fall of the first year of the session, and 3 dates in the second year of the legislative session. This bill requires the FPPC to offer the training on-demand, which should provide greater flexibility for lobbyists seeking to complete their training obligations.

According to a legislative analysis from 1993, the legislative ethics committees were charging \$50 for the lobbyist ethics training at the time. The Senate Committee on Legislative Ethics indicates that the committees charged \$25 for training between 2002-2008, and have charged \$50 from 2009 to the present. While the fee is intended to cover the costs of conducting the training, the fee revenue has exceeded those costs in recent years. As a result, a surplus has developed in the account that is set aside for paying for the costs of lobbyist ethics training. Under the provisions of this bill, any such surplus remaining as of January 1, 2029, would be transferred to the FPPC to fund its lobbyist training responsibilities.

3) Content of Lobbyist Ethics Training and Suggested Amendments: While the bulk of the lobbyist ethics training relates to lobbyists responsibilities under the PRA—something that is

squarely in the jurisdiction of the FPPC—state law also requires the training include information on legislative policies that are outside the scope of the FPPC’s jurisdiction. Specifically, AB 2055 (Levine), Chapter 964, Statutes of 2018, requires that the lobbying ethics courses include information on the policies against harassment, including sexual harassment, established by each house of the Legislature.

While transferring the responsibility for lobbyist ethics training from the ethics committees to the FPPC, this bill also requires the FPPC to consult with the ethics committees when developing the course curriculum. Such consultation should help ensure that the lobbyist ethics training continues to provide appropriate and accurate information about the Assembly’s and Senate’s policies against harassment. However, to ensure that this bill does not create a situation where the FPPC is required to provide training on legislative policies, committee staff recommends that this bill be amended to require that the legislative ethics committees have final approval over the content of the lobbyist ethics training that relates to the legislature’s policies against harassment.

- 4) **Lobbyist Training Requirements in Other States:** According to information from the bill’s author and sponsor, from the National Conference of State Legislatures, and from committee staff research, at least eight states—Alaska, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, New York, Oregon, and Washington—require mandatory training for state lobbyists. Five of these states (Alaska, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, and New York) mandate training on ethics and/or lobbying laws, and that training is administered by the state’s ethics agency. The remaining three states (Maine, Oregon, and Washington) instead focus their training exclusively on legislative codes of conduct or workplace harassment prevention, and in those cases, the training is administered by the state legislature.

- 5) **Arguments in Support:** The sponsor of this bill, the FPPC, writes in support:

Starting January 1, 2029, AB 2592 would transfer the lobbyist training duty to the FPPC. The bill would require that the course curriculum be developed in consultation with the Legislative Ethics Committees and that the course be available on-demand through an online platform, internet webpage, or application. The bill would provide that the fee for the training is \$50, subject to a biennial cost of living adjustment. The bill would also provide that any unused funds collected by the Legislative Ethics Committees from lobbyists for the course shall be transferred to the FPPC for the purpose of developing the course.

While Assembly and Senate Ethics Counsel do an excellent job conducting the training, the FPPC is more appropriately suited to provide this training as the experts on the state’s lobbying laws and the agency charged with advising on the lobbying rules outside of this training. Shifting to an on-demand model will also assist lobbyists in fulfilling their training duty.

- 6) **Technical Amendment:** This bill would move the operative requirement for lobbyists to complete ethics training from Section 8956 of the Government Code to Section 86102.5 of the Government Code. However, the bill does not currently propose making conforming changes to a cross reference found in Section 86103(d) of the Government Code.

Committee staff recommends a technical amendment to this bill to update the cross-reference in Section 86103(d) to reflect the changes proposed by this bill.

- 7) **Previous Legislation:** SB 682 (Greene) of 1993 would have transferred responsibility for lobbyist ethics training to the Secretary of State, among other provisions. SB 682 was vetoed by Governor Pete Wilson, who wrote in his veto message that “the [FPPC] is responsible for the interpretation of the [PRA] as it applies to lobbyists. Thus, the most viable agency to conduct the lobbyist training would be the [FPPC], not the Office of the Secretary of State.”
- 8) **Political Reform Act of 1974:** California voters passed an initiative, Proposition 9, in 1974 that created the FPPC and codified significant restrictions and prohibitions on candidates, officeholders, and lobbyists. That initiative is commonly known as the PRA. Amendments to the PRA that are not submitted to the voters, such as those contained in this bill, must further the purposes of the initiative and require a two-thirds vote of both houses of the Legislature.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Fair Political Practices Commission (Sponsor)

Opposition

None on file.

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