



# OKLAHOMA ETHICS COMMISSION

PHONE: (405) 521-3451 • FAX: (405) 521-4905 • WEBSITE: [WWW.OK.GOV/ETHICS](http://WWW.OK.GOV/ETHICS)

## Staff Memorandum 2015-06

**A lobbyist principal would like to invite a state official and spouse to an entertainment event with tickets valued at \$150 each. The lobbyist principal is a corporation and the tickets were purchased from corporate funds. Is this permissible under the rules and thus applied towards the \$500 maximum? Is the value of the spouse's ticket reportable?**

This is not a permissible expenditure by a lobbyist principal.

Rule 5.7 allows a limit of \$500 for meals. Because this is an “entertainment event” it will not qualify as a meal. Rule 5.8 allows gifts with a limit of \$200 annually to a legislator, or to a family member of a legislator under certain circumstances, for infrequently occurring occasions of personal significance. Such gifts must be for an occasion that is personally significant to the recipient, and the occasion of personal significance to the recipient must be described when reporting the gift. Because the tickets are valued at a total of \$300, this gift would exceed the \$200 limit making it an impermissible expense. In this scenario, the value of any gift given under the “special occasion” exception is reported for both the legislator and any family member, and there is only one \$200 limit for those gifts. There is not a separate \$200 gift limit for the legislator and a \$200 limit for the family member.

In addition, you have stated that the tickets are to be provided by the lobbyist principal. Lobbyist principals are prohibited from providing anything to a legislator except as provided in the rules. See Rule 5.6. Those exceptions are limited to group events such as caucus events, committee events, entire legislature events, and out-of-state events. A lobbyist principal is prohibited from directly giving a gift to an individual legislator. A lobbyist, however, is permitted to give the gift (subject to the \$200 limit). The lobbyist is then required to report the gift, regardless of the source of funds used to pay for the gift.

Please note, the value of any gift given under the Rule 5.8 exception for an occasion of personal significance gift must be reported for the legislator and any family member. In addition, the gift may only be given for an occasion that is personally significant to the recipient, and the occasion of personal significance to the recipient must be described on the report. The value of any meal provided under Rule 5.7 will only be reported for the legislator and not any family of the legislator that is provided a meal.