



NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE EHLMANN PROPOSES HIGHER ETHICAL STANDARDS

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – A new poll by the Missouri Liberty Project reports that 70 to 80 percent of likely voters support ethics reforms, including banning gifts and limiting meals from lobbyists, and requiring lawmakers to wait several years before becoming lobbyists.

“If you think it is bad now, you should have seen it when I first went to the General Assembly as a State Representative in 1989,” recalled St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlmann. “There were no limits and no reporting of freebies legislators received.”

Ehlmann was a member of the Conference Committee that drafted the first significant Ethics Reform Bill in 1991. The bill required reporting of lobbyists’ expenditures. Legislators addressed the issue of the “revolving door” in state government by banning the Governor, but not themselves, from receiving any state appointment for a two-year period after leaving office.

Three years later, the voters of St. Charles County approved a County Charter which went much further. It forbid any elected officer of the County or County employee from accepting “any service or thing of value, directly or indirectly, from any person, firm or corporation having dealings with the County, upon more favorable terms than those granted to the public generally.” The Charter also stated, “No former Council member shall hold any compensated appointive office or employment with the County until one (1) year after the expiration of the term for which the member was elected to the Council.”

Ehlmann has requested the County Council to place Charter changes on the ballot that would extend the existing prohibition on gifts to candidates for County offices and officers-elect. It would also expand the ban on the “revolving door” to include lobbying, and extend the ban to all elected officers of the County. The bill will be introduced at the April 28 County Council meeting. If the ordinance is adopted by the County Council, the Charter amendment would be placed on the August 5 ballot.

“Our County Charter already enforces tough ethical standards. These changes, if approved by the voters, would raise the bar even higher,” said Ehlmann.

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