

# Public Officials' Code of Ethics

**T**he Association believes that all public officials and employees should be of the highest ethical caliber and above reproach.

However, no code of conduct should be so burdensome that it discourages qualified citizens from participating in government, particularly local government, where the spirit of volunteerism and a sense of civic duty far outweigh any expectation of financial gain.

Local government officials should not have their personal and professional integrity called into question by frivolous complaints made to the Ethics Commission. The Association believes that action should be taken to encourage individuals not to make frivolous and unfounded complaints. Also, public officials should be given the same rights under the Ethics Law as under the judicial system, which means they would be considered innocent until proven guilty.

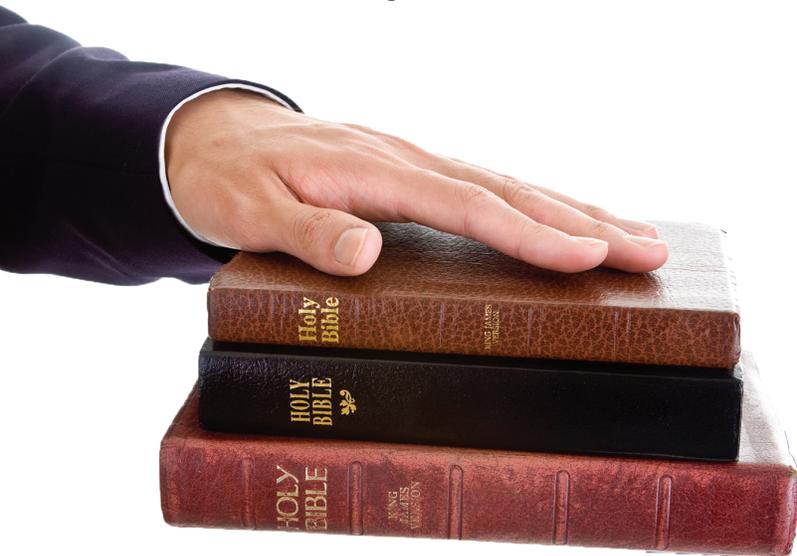
The Association believes investigations by the Ethics Commission should be conducted in strict compliance with judicial jurisprudence and provide for the disclosure of the individual(s) who filed the complaint with the Ethics Commission; the right to confront and cross-examine the complainant(s); the investigation, hearing, and deliberation to be conducted by separate agencies; the recovery of legal fees and a statement clearing the official's name when found

not guilty; timely and reasonable access to evidence by the accused; and a strict 90-day time limit on Ethics Commission investigations.

In addition, the Association believes that public officials should be afforded the basic right of privacy by not disclosing the name of any subject under investigation until the Ethics Commission or a court of law makes a final decision.

The Association also believes that the state Ethics Commission, in administering the Ethics Law, should not be overzealous in the pursuit of the goals of the law, nor should the Ethics Commission be permitted to act unilaterally beyond the intent and spirit of the law. The Ethics Commission should recognize and abide by the Second Class Township Code and other laws pertaining to townships and not give advice that runs counter to the provisions of these laws. ❖

**Local government officials should not have their personal and professional integrity called into question by frivolous complaints made to the Ethics Commission.**



PSATS is urging lawmakers to amend the Ethics Law to encourage individuals not to make frivolous and unfounded complaints against municipal officials. Likewise, public officials facing an ethics complaint should be considered innocent until proven guilty.



**PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS**

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