

Meyers, Robert (COE)

IND 02-34

To: Schreiber, Alicia (CMO)
Subject: RE: Please advise

Alicia,

I imagine it must be difficult carrying around all that extra weight in the heat of the summer. In any event, the County has no waiver policy per se, but the Ethics Commission has been asked questions in the past about baby showers, weddings showers, etc. We take the position that baby gifts given to you by family, co-workers and friends would not have to be disclosed, even if the value of a single gift exceeded \$25. However, gifts given to you by County contractors/vendors, County potential contractors/vendors and all other outsiders must be reported if these gifts are valued at \$25 or more. Where you may have to make a judgment call is the situation of the friend who also happens to be doing business with the County. My suggestion would be to evaluate what came first -- the professional relationship or the business relationship, and then decide accordingly.

Of course, one option that is always available is to disclose every gift you receive that is worth \$25 or more, regardless of who the donor is.

Robert

-----Original Message-----

From: Schreiber, Alicia (CMO)
Sent: Tuesday, August 06, 2002 10:36 AM
To: Meyers, Robert (COE)
Cc: Shiver, Steve (CMO); Mazzella, Christopher (OIG)
Subject: Please advise

Robert, As you know I am due to have a baby in early September. I know that in Congress a waiver is granted to expecting parents known as a "baby waiver" in order to simplify dealing with accepting baby gifts. This waiver must be obtained prior to the delivery of a child. Since I did not see a similar process in our booklet, I am inquiring as to how one deals with this matter at my level. I have attached Congress' Policy for your review. Thank you for your guidance. Alicia.

Things for which a Gift Rule Waiver Is Granted

A Member, officer or employee may accept "[a]nything for which, in an unusual case, a waiver is granted by the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct." (clause 5(a)(3)(T) of House Rule 26).

General Waivers for Wedding and Baby Gifts. Upon receipt of an advance, written request, the Committee will grant a Member, officer or employee a general waiver for gifts received in connection with his or her wedding, or in connection with the birth of a baby. Such general waivers are issued primarily for the convenience of the requester, and notwithstanding the issuance of the waiver, recipients should exercise caution in accepting any gift that likely would not have been offered but for the individual's official position. As to any such gift, the individual should consider its source, nature and value, and any possible conflict with official duties.

A Member, officer or employee who receives wedding or baby gifts that otherwise are not acceptable under the gift rule, but did not submit an advance request for a general waiver, may submit a waiver request for those gifts. However, such post-event requests should include, at a minimum, a description of each gift for which a waiver is requested, including its market value, and the identity of the donor.

The grant of a gift rule waiver by the Committee does *not* waive the requirement