

PRESS RELEASE

Connecticut Office of State Ethics Reaches \$2,000 Settlement with Robert V. Matthews

December 29, 2008

The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board approved a stipulation and consent order between the Enforcement Division of the Office of State Ethics (OSE) and Robert V. Matthews, now a resident of Florida. Matthews, previously a Connecticut resident, agreed to pay a civil penalty of \$2,000 for failing to file a lobbyist registration and for entering into a contract that was contingent upon the outcome of the lobbying effort.

The former State Ethics Commission issued a complaint against Matthews for violations of the Code of Ethics, including lobbying a public official on a contingent basis. Specifically, in the fall of 2000, Matthews signed a "consulting agreement" with Pinnacle Foods, Inc., whereby Pinnacle would pay Matthews in stock to use his contacts to assist in procuring money from the State of Connecticut. Matthews, a friend of Governor Rowland, lobbied the Governor during a golf outing. He also lobbied agency heads to obtain a loan or financing for Pinnacle. The complaint alleged that Matthews' payment from Pinnacle Foods was contingent upon his success in securing financing from the State.

Under Connecticut law, a person must register as a lobbyist if he receives, or agrees to receive, compensation of \$2,000 or more in a calendar year for lobbying activities (Connecticut General Statutes § 1-91 (k) and (l)). It is illegal in Connecticut to entertain a lobbying contract that is contingent upon the outcome of that effort (Connecticut General Statutes § 1-97 (b)).

Matthews denied knowledge of any legal impediments to his actions in the settlement, noting his 25-year friendship with the Governor.

"You do not have to show up in the halls of the Capitol building to lobby," explained OSE Executive Director, Carol Carson. "If you are attempting to influence legislative or administrative action, you are lobbying. In addition, payment contingent on successful lobbying is illegal and will be met with enforcement action."

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