

I am Vice-Chair of Common Cause Oklahoma, and offer these comments on its behalf.

First, we agree that the Ethics Commission's rules should be amended to permit citizens to give written and other informative communications to public officials.

Second, we believe that if the informative communications that are provided have significant value, they should be reported. We therefore support the recent proposed Amendment 3, which requires the reporting of donated informative materials that have a value of over \$100.00. An alternative that would eliminate problems in valuation might be to require a donor to report the gifting of only copyrighted informative materials.

The reason we support the reporting of informative materials that could have significant value is to forestall the temptation to disguise what is really a gift. For instance, a person who wishes to influence an official might buy the official a hardbound copy of Barack Obama's new book. That book could arguably pertain to the performance of the official's duties, since it at least in part deals with the functioning of the government, but it also happens to be a current best-seller. Or what about a multi-volume history of World War II? It would deal in part with the operations of the U.S. government, but could also have significant value. Disclosure is the easiest way to address such issues.

We appreciate the time and effort that the Commission has spent on this issue, and will welcome any questions.

Lynn Howell
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