



Political Law Alert

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Notable Lobbying Law Developments in Texas and Puerto Rico

Below please find updates on recent lobbying law developments in Texas and Puerto Rico.

Texas Requires FARA Disclosure by Lobbying Registrants

Texas House Bill 1785, effective September 1, 2019, requires lobbying registrants to disclose on their registration form whether they are, or are required to be, registered under the U.S. Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 (FARA). If required to make a FARA disclosure, the Texas Ethics Commission requires that lobbyists promptly update their registration form rather than wait until the next annual registration is due.

Puerto Rico Requires Executive Branch Lobbyist Registration

Under Executive Order 2019-031, individuals lobbying Puerto Rico's executive branch are now subject to a lobbyist registration requirement. This includes, but is not limited to, procurement lobbying, where one seeks to obtain contracts or business from Puerto Rico. Previously, lobbyist registration in Puerto Rico was only necessary for those attempting to influence the legislative branch. Per guidance from the Puerto Rico Department of Justice, lobbyists have until November 6, 2019, to complete their initial registration.

Any individual who receives compensation in return for communicating with an executive branch official in Puerto Rico on behalf of another person regarding covered matters is required to register as a lobbyist. Covered matters include legislation, regulations, procurement and contracting, and any other matter that influences or impacts public policy. There are a limited number of activities that are exempt from the registration requirement, including, but not limited to:

- responding in writing to a required government request for official information;
- certain communications made available to the public in general;
- participation in advisory committees; and
- communications for licenses or permits issued by an agency as part of its ministerial management.

Registrations are valid through June 30 of the following year and renewals must be completed within 10 days of July 1, the beginning of the next annual cycle. There are no other filing obligations, such as the periodic reports required under many other lobbying laws, beyond the annual registration.

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