

Advisory Opinion 2016-1

Please Note: For clarity, references to and excerpts from provisions of statutes or the Ethics Guidelines have been updated to conform to subsequent changes in numbering and language, where the changes have not affected the substance of the Opinion.

March 30, 2016

Honorable Katherine Rogers
4 Jay Drive
Concord NH 03301-7831

Dear Representative Rogers,

I am writing in response to your inquiry dated March 17, 2016, about whether, consistent with applicable statutes and Ethics Guidelines, it is permissible for legislators to accept payment for the cost of registration associated with attendance at a “Multi-Sector Leadership Summit” entitled, “Combating Elder Financial Exploitation in New Hampshire,” organized and sponsored by the Coalition Against Later Life Abuse (CALLA).

According to the information you provided, the Summit will bring together multi-disciplinary professionals to take part in presentations, panel discussions, and workgroup sessions focused on the problem of financial exploitation of New Hampshire’s older citizens. The registration fee of \$60 would be waived for invited legislators.

You also inquired if your participation in presenting a welcoming introduction would qualify as an “Honorarium.”

Based on the information provided about the Summit’s purposes and activities, the Committee agrees that the event is “a bona fide conference meant to communicate information relating to matters of legislative concern.” Therefore, paid registration for attendees would qualify for exemption from the prohibition on “Gifts” under RSA 14-C:3, as “Expense Reimbursement” under RSA 14-C:2, III, and your participation presenting welcoming remarks would qualify as an “Honorarium” as defined under RSA 14-C:2, V. See Interpretive Ruling 2013-1.

Both the expense reimbursement and the honorarium must be reported in accordance with RSA 14-C:4.

We appreciate the opportunity to be of assistance.

Sincerely,
Donna Sytek
Chairman