



MEDIA RELEASE

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Broad Coalition Pushes Lawmakers for Real Ethics Reform

ATLANTA – Made up of a broad coalition of watchdog and educational groups, the Georgia Alliance for Ethics Reform is urging Georgia lawmakers to take further steps to strengthen the state's ethics laws. The Alliance includes Georgia Watch, Common Cause, the state chapter of the Tea Party Patriots, and former gubernatorial candidate Ray Boyd.

"The people of this state want action now, and the fact that such a broad alliance as this one has formed, is evidence of that," said former Georgia House Minority Leader and current Alliance member Bob Irvin.

The Alliance is calling for ethics reform in four main areas:

1. Lobbyist Gifts and Reporting – limit the amount of any one gift to \$100, to define what permitted expenses are, and to improve timely reporting of the gifts.
2. State Ethics Commission – rename the commission the "State Ethics Commission", restore rule making authority, include all public officials in its oversight, toughen fines and overhaul the appointment process for commissioners.
3. Campaign and Political Action Committee (PAC) Limits – require PACs to disclose all expenditures, limit transfers out of a candidate's campaign account to other candidates, and limit use of campaign funds to legitimate campaign expenses.
4. Conflicts of Interest and Misconduct – stop public officials and their families from holding state contracts, stop members of the General Assembly from serving as lobbyists, extend the "revolving door" prohibition on lobbying to the executive branch and legislative staff members, and require financial disclosure by department heads and members of major state boards and commissions.

After a comparison between Georgia and other southeastern states, the Alliance has determined that Georgia is trailing on many of the most basic ethical standards.

"We have some catching up to do," said Irvin.

The Georgia Alliance for Ethics Reform came together specifically to fight for strong ethics reform under the Gold Dome and across the state. We invite all groups and individuals with an interest in stronger ethics legislation to join the Alliance at www.georgiaethicsreform.com.

Founded in 2002, Georgia Watch is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501-(c)(3) watchdog group focusing on consumer education and research in the areas of health care, insurance, identity theft, consumer energy issues and personal finance. For more information, call Georgia Watch at 404-525-1085, or visit us at www.georgiawatch.org.