

Conflict of Interest Training – Pretest

In recent years, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has discovered that the online training course addressing ethical conflicts potentially arising in municipal employment has not been sufficiently successful in achieving its goals. Some consensus has been reached that a potential deficiency in the program is the absence of a valid pretest diagnostic which could effectively prime employees for learning the rules and regulations which would naturally follow in the subsequent online seminar. Below is a proposed model to fulfill this need.

Question 1: One of your current neighbors recently dated a firefighter whose step-father owns minority shares in a mutual fund which is led by a twelve-member executive board. The committee vice-chairman's wife is running a local newsletter ad for free kittens from a litter which her hairdresser's cat has just delivered. The father of the litter is unknown, but is believed to be occasionally fed by the bassist of a Jimmy Buffet tribute band which frequently plays gigs at the nearby Kiwanis Club. You yourself are not a member of the club, but you did once change a flat tire in their parking lot on a weekend during daylight savings time. How many kittens may you adopt?

- A. None
- B. Only one
- C. Up to three

Question 2: A week after you retire as city comptroller, the niece of your landscaper's podiatrist asks you to serve as one of three judges in the annual *DPW's Got Talent!* fundraiser. You agree, but just before the show begins, see that the fourth act on the bill is a kindergarten barbershop quartet managed by the son-in-law of your second wife's divorce attorney. This same individual, two years ago, was surreptitiously filmed corking the bats of the public works softball team, costing your comptroller's office a semi-final spot in the municipal slow pitch summer league and its associate pension step advancement. Paperwork shows the cork used in the offense was purchased through a special requisition order from mayoral discretionary funds and approved by your subordinate while you were away one month for elective gall bladder surgery, though the forms were completed in duplicate rather than triplicate, as required for French Guyanese timber which is fair-trade, but not organic. Must you recuse yourself as judge of the show?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Only during the fourth act

Question 3: After leaving the priesthood and being named provisional head of the parks department, you have recently joined the city gaming commission and also acquired voluntary and advisory roles in the local licensing board and state-wide task force on marijuana legalization. A recent drop in economic development has led to a series of winter budget shortfalls and necessitated the consolidation of several legally-mandated programs. One proposal from the drama chair of a nearby community college is to replace the public library's static nativity scene with live actors reciting a prepared script which includes subtle and tasteful mentions of various liquor stores, headshops, and greyhound racetracks. The county chamber of commerce has strongly endorsed this idea and also the possibility of discrete product placement around the manger and in the gift boxes of the Magi. How should you vote on these proposals?

- A. Approval, the economic interests of the community *are* the interests of the community
- B. Disapproval, there is a superseding moral order above the pecuniary affairs of this world
- C. I want to go back to the easy questions