

## **Turn a Blind Eye?**

As a member of the security staff, you are in a position to observe behavior and overhear conversations, even when you're not trying. One day you hear a legislator on his state-issued cell phone placing a substantial bet on the upcoming Saints/Steelers game. You have suspected for some time that this legislator gambles regularly, but this is the first time that you have direct knowledge of it. Over the years, you have overheard other inappropriate things, but have always kept your mouth shut. What do you do this time?

- Who has the dilemma? (It may be more than one person.)
  
- What values or principles are involved?
  
- What values or principles are in conflict?
  
- Questions to discuss:
  - Does your action change if what you overheard was immoral?
  
  - What if the person was a legislative staffer, rather than a legislator?
  
  - What if he was placing the bet on his personal cell phone, not the state-issued one?
  
- What do you do? And what values, policies or rules guide your decision?

## Stand Corrected

As the sergeant-at-arms for the Senate, you watch debates on public policy issues – sometimes with amusement and sometimes with fascination. This time it is different. The Senate Transportation Committee is discussing a bill to fund a right-of-way for a state highway. You have a particular interest in this bill as the proposed right-of-way runs near your house. You believe the noise and pollution will impact your standard of living. You joined **Say No Now!** – the community group that studied the issue. The group is lobbying the legislature. In the Senate hearing, the bill sponsor gives incorrect information on the alignment and the negative effects on the surrounding area. No one contradicts him.

- Who has the dilemma? (It may be more than one person.)
  
- What values or principles are involved?
  
- What values or principles are in conflict?
  
- Questions to discuss:
  - What are the obligations of your job?
  
  - What are your rights as a citizen?
  
  - Is it acceptable to let misinformation remain uncorrected?
  
- What do you do? And what values, policies or rules guide your decision?

## **Giving You the Run Around**

As a member of the sergeant-at-arms' staff, you often run errands for legislators using a state-owned vehicle. One legislator in particular asks you to run such errands more than others. You like this legislator, so you don't usually mind the frequency of these requests. Lately, however, the legislator has started to ask you to run errands that are more personal in nature. At first she asked if you would mind grabbing lunch for her (only if you were out getting some for yourself), but increasingly she has asked you to perform tasks such as picking up dry cleaning, paperwork to refinance her mortgage, and the like – again, “only if you are out already.” Today she comes to you in a panic and asks if you could pick up her son at school, as a scheduling error has left him without a ride.

- Who has the dilemma? (It may be more than one person.)
  
- What values are involved?
  
- What values are in conflict?
  
- Questions to discuss
  - Does it make a difference if you don't like the legislator very much?
  
  - What if the legislator asked you to take her car to pick up her son from school?
  
- What do you do? And what values, policies or rules guide your decision?

## **Hallway Heartburn**

Your job is control access to hallway that runs between the chamber and the members-only lounge. There is a clearly-marked sign that states lobbyists must not enter the hallway, but in practice most days the hallway is full of lobbyists trying to mingle and chat with members. The Speaker has adopted the attitude of many of his predecessors in that the rules are not strictly enforced in the hallway, although technically you have the power to enforce them. The Speaker likes you and seems to appreciate it when you occasionally ask the lobbyists to leave. You are uncomfortable with the lobbyists having such a presence in an area that is technically supposed to be lobbyist-free. You also feel it is your duty to closely adhere to the rules and preserve safety and security in the Capitol. You know that while some members don't seem to mind the lobbyists, others really dislike having them there.

- Who has the dilemma? (It may be more than one person.)
  
- What values are involved?
  
- What values are in conflict?
  
- Questions to discuss:
  - Do you strictly enforce the rules?
  
  - Do you take your cues from the presiding officer?
  
  - Is it important to maintain good relations with the lobbyists?
  
  - What if many of the lobbyists are former members who ask you for special treatment?
  
- What do you do? And what values, policies or rules guide your decision?

## **Political Activity**

Your job is a non-partisan position, even though you are appointed by the presiding officer. You have always enjoyed politics and you enjoy your job at the legislature in part because it gives you a front-row seat to all the political and policy action going on in the state. You have been politically active in your community in the past, but mostly at the local level. A friend is running for an open legislative seat and she asks you to help on her campaign. State laws, chamber rules, and your office's personnel policies don't specifically prohibit you from participating in campaigns on your own time. Do you agree to help her?

- Who has the dilemma? (It may be more than one person.)
  
- What values are involved?
  
- What values are in conflict?
  
- Questions to discuss:
  - Does the likely election outcome affect your decision? What if you know she'll win (or lose)?
  
  - Does it matter if your level of involvement is behind the scenes?
  
  - What do you say to a legislator who hears about your involvement and asks you about it?

What do you do? And what values, policies or rules guide your decision?

### **A Meal Fit for a King (Cake)**

A former legislator-turned-lobbyist, one whom you know very well, shows up at the Capitol on the first day of Mardi Gras with two king cakes – enough to feed the entire staff twice over. He asks you to distribute the cake to your staff and adds that the two lucky people who find the baby in the cake will be treated to lunch at the newest five-star restaurant in town. There's no law that says staff can't take advantage of this offer. This lobbyist is generous to staff and asks for special treatment in access to members. You wonder – what will he ask for this time?

- Who has the dilemma? (It may be more than one person.)
  
- What values are involved?
  
- What values are in conflict?
  
- Questions to discuss:
  - Should you accept the cake for your staff?
  
  - Should the people who win accept the baby and the free lunch?
  
  - If you win, should you do the same?
  
  - Does this ingratiate the lobbyist to you? To your staff?
  
- What do you do? And what values, policies or rules guide your decision?

## **No More Free Lunch**

Your state has a new gift restriction law that places a limit on the amount or value of what a lobbyist can give to a legislator or a legislative employee. You don't get many freebees, but you do enjoy dinner every now and then with a lobbyist-buddy. The lobbyist also has to disclose the gift. The two of you have a ritual where you go to a nice restaurant and shoot-the-breeze once a month. Buddy is an old friend and both of you want the tradition to continue. Your legislative job doesn't pay all that well and paying for your own dinner at expensive restaurants would be a strain. Buddy suggests he will continue to pay and not disclose that you are dining with him. "We only gossip and don't discuss actual policy," he tells you.

- Who has the dilemma? (It may be more than one person.)
  
- What values are involved?
  
- What values are in conflict?
  
- Questions to discuss:
  - Does accepting a nice meal after hours with a friend change the way you look at your friend in the legislative world?
  
  - If Buddy does not report the meal, should you report him?
  
  - How do you separate the duties of your job from your loyalty to a friend?
  
- What do you do? And what values, policies or rules guide your decision?

## **Managing the Crowds and the Public**

Your state recently added metal detectors at the main entrance to the Capitol and closed the other entrances. This makes for a large crowd, especially in the morning. People, especially lobbyists, go in and out all day long. This session there is a new lobbyist, Sally Sunshine, who is very personable and polite. On this particular Monday morning, you're manning the entrance and trying to enforce an orderly procession through security. Sally comes through with a large box of materials for members of the House Education committee. She goes through the metal detector and puts her box on the belt. "I'll be back," she says. She comes back with a second box and you put her through the same procedure. "One more time," she says. When she returns there is a long line of school kids in green shirts lined up to get in. She will be late for the committee meeting if she has to wait in line.

- Who has the dilemma? (It may be more than one person.)
  
- What values are involved?
  
- What values are in conflict?
  
- Questions to discuss:
  - What are the consequences if you let her bypass security?
  
  - Does the fact that she is friendly and you've gotten to know her make a difference?
  
  - Should the fact that she is a woman with heavy boxes affect your decision?
  
  - Do you – or should you – ever make exceptions at the security line?
  
- What do you do? And what values, policies or rules guide your decision?

## **May Be Trouble**

You work at a capitol where there is open access. One woman is a frequent visitor to the Capitol and is familiar to everyone. You suspect she is using the bathrooms that are located near an entrance for bathing. You've received some complaints about this, but haven't addressed this with her. On occasion, she exhibits mental issues. Lately, her behavior seems to be escalating. She continually tries to see the Senate President. He met with her once, but has refused every subsequent request. The president's chief of staff asks you to restrict her entrance to the Capitol. You are uncomfortable with this situation and request on several levels. The woman is a citizen of the state and she is not breaking any laws; her behavior makes people uncomfortable, but she has been harmless up until now.

- Who has the dilemma? (It may be more than one person.)
  
- What values are involved?
  
- What values are in conflict?
  
- Questions to discuss:
  - How do you treat “different” types of people who come into the capitol?
  
  - Does it make a difference if she is homeless?
  
  - What if she has hygiene problems?
  
- What do you do? And what values, policies or rules guide your decision?