

Ethics panel says lobbyist-bought meal misreported

FILED
January 25, 2017
Data Center
Missouri Public
Service Commission

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Several Missouri lobbyists likely broke state laws requiring that they name the lawmakers they buy meals for when they first reported a steakhouse dinner at a conservative legislative policy meeting, according to a report by the state's ethics panel.

The Missouri Ethics Commission issued letters of concern Friday to seven lobbyists, who were among 15 who split a nearly \$5,700 dinner bill during last year's annual American Legislative Exchange Council meeting. The group provides template legislation for conservative lawmakers.

Five Republican lawmakers — former House speakers John Diehl and Tim Jones, Rep. Sue Allen and Sens. Ed Emery and Wayne

Wallingford — were among the crowd of about 40 that dined at a Dallas steakhouse.

The commission report says seven lobbyists improperly reported the meal as being bought for the entire General Assembly, rather than listing individual lawmakers present. That's because not all legislators were invited, which would have allowed lobbyists to report the meal to the group as a whole even if only a few attended.

The report, agreed to by the lobbyists, says the lobbyists believed all lawmakers had been invited and later corrected their reports to list the expenses as going toward specific lawmakers.

"As the settlement reflects, the respondents all understood that the invitation for this event had

sent to every member of the General Assembly, as had occurred in prior years," Ameren Missouri spokesman Warren Wood said in a statement. An Ameren lobbyist was among those listed in the report. Wood said the lobbyist amended her disclosure report when she learned not every lawmaker had been invited.

Other lobbyists or their attorneys were not immediately available to comment or did not immediately return messages Monday.

Sean Soendker Nicholson, the executive director of liberal advocacy group Progress Missouri, said in a statement that he filed a complaint about the meal and the group is glad the commission took ac-

*Mexico Ms Lodge 9/1/2015
Ex 5*

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Exhibit No. 5
Date: 10-20-2017 Reporter MSM
File No. ER-2016-0179