



North Carolina General Assembly Legislative Ethics Committee

May 21, 2009

To: George Hall, Legislative Services Officer
Dennis McCarty, Director, Information Services Division

From: Senator Steven Goss, Cochair of the Joint Legislative Ethics Committee
Representative Rick Glazier, Cochair of the Joint Legislative Ethics Committee

Re: **Application of P & G 1 to Member Only Network (MONET)**
AM-LEC-09-001

Question: Is it permissible for ISD to develop a member only network (MONET) by which legislators could connect one member-owned laptop computer to the legislative computer system for the purpose of obtaining secure access to the Internet?

Answer: A member only network implemented with appropriate restrictions is consistent with Principal & Guideline 1.

Discussion: The Legislative Ethics Committee (Committee) has been asked by the Information Services Division (ISD) whether it is permissible for ISD to develop a member only network (MONET) by which legislators could connect one member-owned laptop computer to the legislative computer system for the purpose of obtaining secure access to the Internet? In order to do this, the Legislative Services Commission must adopt an exception to an existing NCGA computer policy.

The General Assembly is a part-time legislature. It is made up of individuals who, in addition to their legislative duties, also operate businesses or have other careers. Historically, legislators who needed to conduct business while in Raleigh installed private telephone lines in their offices. These were used to receive and send business-related telephone calls and faxes. These phone lines were secure and allowed members to deal with confidential matters. With the advent of cell phones, private lines are no longer necessary for telephone conversations. However, there isn't a similar secure method to allow members to send and receive electronic documents.

Principal and Guideline 1 provides 'that:

"It is inappropriate to use excessively the State Telephone Network, the legislative computer system, and other State equipment for personal and business reasons. These services and this equipment shall be used primarily for legislative purposes rather than personal and business purposes.

Based on P & G 1, the Legislative Services Commission (LSC) has adopted policies related to the use of the legislative computer system. The *Computer Devices Attached to the NCGA Network* policy prohibits non-NCGA owned computer equipment from being attached to or otherwise accessing the legislative computer network.

In response to member requests for secure access to the internet, ISD has proposed a Member Only Network (MONET). Implementation of the MONET would require an exception to the Services Commission *Computer Devices Attached to the NCGA Network* Policy. The proposed exception would have the following parameters:

- Create a network for members' use only.
- Use of the network would be provided for members as long as the direct measurable cost to the public is none or is negligible and there is no negative impact on performance of duties.
- The network would provide only wireless connectivity to the internet. Access to the NCGA network domain (data) will not be available.
- The network would only be used in the member's office.
- The exemption would only be approved for one member-owned computer. No other computers would be permitted to use the network.
- The member-owned computer would have to be registered with the Information Systems Division (ISD) and configured by ISD only.

The MONET as implemented under the proposed exception to the Services Commission Policy is consistent with Principal & Guideline 1 and may be offered to members.