



April 7, 2017

Ed Gillespie for Governor
2100 Maywill St
Richmond, VA 23230

Mr. Gillespie,

Yesterday in Richmond you unveiled your campaign's government ethics plan at a press conference. Given your recent interest in improved ethics and increased transparency, the Democratic Party of Virginia is asking you to take the following actions:

(1) Disclose your list of consulting clients and activities from the past five years. You stated yesterday that you “will ensure that the governor’s office is both accountable and transparent to the people it is meant to serve,” and called to extend the “revolving door” ban for lobbyists as well as “support more frequent disclosures for elected and appointed officials.”

For several decades you have represented a number of clients through lobbying and “public affairs” firms. These clients have provided you and your partners lucrative contracts; in 2014, the most recent year in which you released a client list, you reported earning more than \$3 million from your public affairs clients. Many of these clients may have business before the Commonwealth of Virginia and its next governor.

Surely, you would agree with us that the people of Virginia deserve to know whether their governor is returning favors to previous clients. Therefore, in the spirit of full disclosure, we are asking for your complete transparency by releasing the names of your past clients, consulting activities and personal financial interests from the past five years.

On your Virginia Statement of Economic Interest, you also listed four industries for which you consulted -- and your spokesperson specified four clients (Anthem, Microsoft, Bank of America, and AT&T) to a reporter. We are therefore asking you to report what work you performed on behalf of these clients as well as all other clients of Ed Gillespie Strategies and the Brunswick Group over the last five years to offer better accountability and transparency to Virginians.

(2) To disclose any Virginia contracts for which these clients have bid, or any public affairs work you have performed on behalf of these clients related to Virginia government over the previous five years.

Virginians deserve to know which of your previous clients may have business before the next governor of Virginia. Accordingly, we ask that you reveal any work that you have done for these clients related to government contracts or regulations in the Commonwealth of Virginia. To our knowledge, Microsoft, Bank of America and AT&T -- all firms you have reportedly represented within the last two years -- all currently have contracts with the state government in the Commonwealth.

(3) To announce a conflict of interest plan, detailing the firewall you would create to prevent any conflict of interests that may arise from your work for past clients. Your plan states that you would like to “lead a state government in a honest and ethical manner,” and “will support measures to increase the frequency of disclosures related to Conflict of Interest and campaign finance.”

Therefore, we are asking for a better understanding on how you plan to put a firewall in place between your work as governor and your past clients. In Washington, D.C., we have seen a number of conflicts of interest emerge with the Trump administration and the President’s businesses. Virginians might suspect that past Brunswick Group, Gillespie, Quinn and Associates and Ed Gillespie Strategies clients will expect a seat at the table in your administration.

Yet, there was no mention in your ethics plan on how you will prevent unethical or improper activity between yourself, your staff, and those whom you have lobbied and consulted for over the course of your career.

We ask that you clearly articulate a firewall policy that would prevent previous clients from getting taxpayer-funded favors from the governor.

Democrats like myself do not take any potential conflicts of interest or ethics concerns lightly. This is why I have proposed a government ethics bill in the General Assembly every year for the past four years. These bills have only been killed by Republicans in light of partisan politics, and I was disappointed yesterday to see Republican colleagues of mine stand in support of your efforts despite rejecting similar efforts by my party.

Please do not follow President Trump’s lead on refusing to disclose personal financial details, especially when such conflict of interest matters are raised.

Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to hearing from you soon.



Delegate Marcus Simon
Virginia’s 53rd District