



*Anne Arundel County
Ethics Commission*

November 16, 2011

By Electronic Mail Only

Re: AO-11-98

You inquired whether you may accept the invitation sent to you by a local law firm to attend a holiday reception being held at the Congressional Country Club in early December. Some of the firm's members are lobbyists in Anne Arundel County, i.e., "controlled donors." For this reason, the gift provisions of the Public Ethics Law are relevant to your inquiry.

According to §7-5-106(c)(2)(i), a gift of meals/beverages may only be accepted from a controlled donor if it is of "modest" value. The ethics commission has determined that a modest value may not exceed \$25. A spokesman from the host entity advised that because the party was being held at a private club, he could not divulge the cost per person of the event, but suspected that it would exceed \$25. In the absence of confirmation of the cost per person, the ethics commission can only conclude that the event does not fall within the permissible exception for gifts of meals and beverages of modest value offered by controlled donors.

For this reason, the ethics commission advises that the invitation, sent out to 60 county employees, may not be accepted.

Thank you for your inquiry. Please contact the ethics commission office if you have additional questions.

The Anne Arundel County Ethics Commission

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Betsy K. Dawson".

By: Betsy K. Dawson, Executive Director