

**Joint Legislative Committee on Ethical Standards**

**Resolution on Ethics Counsel Question 6**

ADOPTED JUNE 23, 2009

Question 6 of Ethics Counsel reads as follows:

6. For purposes of N.J.S.A. 52:13D-24, is there a monetary threshold for determining what constitutes a “thing of value” related to official duties? Legislators and staffers are often offered token gifts such as shirts, cookies, plaques, calendars, etc. from constituents, organizations and dignitaries in connection with their legislative work. Is it inappropriate to accept such things?

**Whereas**, no member of the Legislature or staff shall accept or receive a “thing of value” offered or related to official duties, except as otherwise authorized by law or Code of Ethics;

**Whereas**, N.J.S.A. 52:13D-24 does not contain a monetary threshold for a “thing of value” related to a legislator’s official duties, it is nevertheless the opinion of this joint committee that gifts of *de minimus* value are not “things of value” within the contemplation of the statute; and

**Whereas**, T-shirts, cookies, plaques, calendars, flowers, fruit baskets and similar items of *de minimus* value offered to legislators and staff are often in the nature of tokens of appreciation and may generally be referred to as “token gifts.”

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the types of token gifts as listed above, and similar items, all of *de minimus* value, may be accepted by legislators and staff subject to their own judgment that the token gifts are not offered to influence the legislators or staff in the performance of their official duties. Legislators must report token gifts pursuant to Code §2:14.a.(5).