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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Issues New Rule for Lawyer/Lobbyists

HARRISBURG, December 22, 2003 — Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ralph J. Cappy today announced the implementation of a new Supreme Court rule regarding lawyers who act as lobbyists.

The new rule amends the Supreme Court's Rules of Professional Conduct, the Court's stringent standards that guide a lawyer's professional and ethical conduct. Effective immediately, the rules' changes:

- require lawyers acting as lobbyists to comply with registration and disclosure laws, regulations or rules enacted by the executive or legislative branches of state government;
- authorize disclosure of information related to client representation in order to comply with disclosure laws, regulations or rules; and
- reiterate that all such compliance actions by a lawyer-lobbyist must be consistent with the Rules of Professional Conduct.

The new rule emphasizes the long-standing and fundamental expectation that lawyers, as individuals, must in the public interest adhere to strict ethical standards and must take personal responsibility for their conduct in meeting those standards.

"This new rule strikes an appropriate balance between the important principle of judicial independence and this court's interest in fostering collaboration with other branches of government toward a common goal in the public's interest," Chief Justice Cappy said. "By this action, both the public's trust and confidence in government and our strength as a tripartite democracy is sustained."

After a challenge by two attorneys, Commonwealth Court last year found a Lobbyist Disclosure Law unconstitutional, ruling the act infringed on the Supreme Court's authority to regulate Pennsylvania's 57,000 lawyers. The decision was affirmed by an equally divided Supreme Court.

The state Senate adopted lobbying rules in January, requiring lobbyists to file quarterly expense reports while the House is considering its own approach to lobbyist disclosure.

The new rule came about after careful review by the Supreme Court that included input from the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court, which was created by the court in 1972 to consider and investigate the conduct of any person subject to the Pennsylvania Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement.

(A copy of the rule change is attached or may be found at www.courts.state.pa.us)