

Senate Ethics Committee

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ADVISORY OPINION #93-1

To: Members, South Carolina Senate

From: Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr.
Chairman, Senate Ethics Committee

Date: April 6, 1993

Re: Soliciting Support for College Board Candidate

The Committee has been asked by a member whether it is appropriate for a member to solicit support for a college board candidate prior to the screening of all candidates.

Section 8-13-930 prohibits a candidate for an office elected by the General Assembly from seeking directly the pledge of a vote from any member of the General Assembly prior to the screening of all candidates. Likewise, that section prohibits a member of the General Assembly from offering a pledge of his vote until all candidates have been screened.

Although the question presented here is not specifically addressed by § 8-13-930, the Committee believes that it is inappropriate under the intent of § 8-13-930 for a member to seek illegal pledges of support or votes from other members of the General Assembly on behalf of a candidate prior to the screening of all the candidates.

The Committee finds, however, that it is permissible for a member to "introduce" a candidate to other members in person or by way of letter prior to screening of all candidates, provided the member does not indicate that he has pledged his vote to the candidate or seek pledges or votes from other members. In introducing a candidate, a member may refer to the candidate's background and qualifications for the particular office and may indicate how the member is acquainted with the candidate.