

**Codey Proposes Revising Ethics Laws in New Jersey**  
**November 18, 2004**  
**by DAVID KOCIENIEWSKI**

TRENTON, Nov. 17 - Pledging to strengthen what he called New Jersey's lax ethical standards, Acting Gov. Richard J. Codey signed an executive order on Wednesday to provide ethics training for thousands of state employees and ban special fees for lobbyists, and expressed support for two campaign finance measures.

Mr. Codey, the Senate president who became acting governor on Tuesday after a succession of scandals hobbled former Gov. James E. McGreevey, said he sought to restore public confidence in state government by ensuring that ethics would be a top priority during the 14 months of his term.

Signing his second executive order since taking office, Mr. Codey appointed two legal experts - Paula Ann Franzese, a Seton Hall law professor, and Daniel O'Hern, a former State Supreme Court justice - as special counsels to review the state's ethics regulations and develop the ethics training program.

The executive order also bars any consulting or lobbying firm that solicits bond underwriting work from the state from accepting contingency fees from clients who win such work. Mr. Codey said that practice was ripe for abuse because lobbying and consulting firms could use those fees in turn to make political donations to elected officials who might award lucrative state underwriting contracts to their banking clients, who are prohibited from making donations.

"People need to have faith that government is working for them," Mr. Codey said during a news conference in the State House. Mr. Codey said he would also work with legislators to extend a measure Mr. McGreevey enacted that forbids state vendors to make campaign donations, a practice known as "pay to play." Mr. Codey is also supporting a legislative measure to allow local communities to adopt stronger pay-to-play bans for their contracts.

Republicans said they supported the initiatives Mr. Codey unveiled on Wednesday but challenged him to go further and take steps to ban people from holding more than one elective office, and to prohibit the state's powerful county bosses from channeling massive donations to candidates elsewhere in the state, a tactic known as "wheeling" that critics say evades contribution limits.

"Dick Codey deserves applause for taking a first step, but this does not go nearly far enough," State Senator Thomas H. Kean Jr. said. "People in this state have waited three years for comprehensive pay-to-play reform, and we have a responsibility to deliver it."

By focusing on ethics on his second day in office, Mr. Codey hopes to distance himself from the scandal-battered McGreevey administration.

After signing an order to overhaul the state mental health system on Tuesday, Mr. Codey spent much of Wednesday reaching out to other officials. He held telephone conferences with Govs. George E. Pataki of New York and Edward G. Rendell of Pennsylvania, aides said.

Mr. Codey is expected to lay out new pieces of his agenda in an address to the League of Municipalities conference on Thursday. His spokeswoman, Kelley Heck, said he would also unveil more ethics initiatives in the coming weeks, possibly including the creation of an auditor general's office to investigate corruption and a provision to ban wheeling.