

VERMONT

INTRODUCTION

The Vermont State Ethics Commission is an advisory body with jurisdiction over elected or appointed executive branch officials, state employees, and state legislators. [Vt. Stat tit. 3, § 1221\(a\); Vermont State Ethics Commission, State Code of Ethics, § 2\(13\)](#). The Commission has no authority to investigate or enforce the ethics laws. It accepts complaints and undertakes a preliminary review to determine what state agency, if any, has jurisdiction over the complaint and then refers it to that agency. [Vt. Stat tit. 3, § 1223](#).

SCOPE OF SANCTIONS

Personnel Actions – NONE

Injunctions – NONE

Fines – NONE

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS for 2016, 2017, and 2018, if available

1. **How many complaints were filed?**

2016 – This question is not applicable as there was no independent ethics agency.

2017 – This question is not applicable as there was no independent ethics agency.

2018 – 36 complaints were filed. 18 of these 36 complaints were consolidated into one.¹

2. **How many complaints were dismissed?**

2016 – This question is not applicable as there was no independent ethics agency.

2017 – This question is not applicable as there was no independent ethics agency.

2018 – 8 cases were dismissed for lack of an appropriate state agency with jurisdiction.²

3. **How many cases were resolved with a finding of no ethics violation?**

2016 – This question is not applicable as there was no independent ethics agency.

2017 – This question is not applicable as there was no independent ethics agency.

2018 – This question is not applicable as this commission only has the power to conduct a preliminary investigation and cannot sanction.³

4. **How many cases were resolved with a finding of an ethics violation?**

2016 – This question is not applicable as there was no independent ethics agency.

2017 – This question is not applicable as there was no independent ethics agency.

2018 – This question is not applicable as this commission only has the power to conduct a preliminary investigation and cannot sanction.

5. What sanction was adopted?

2016 – This question is not applicable as there was no independent ethics agency.

2017 – This question is not applicable as there was no independent ethics agency.

2018 – This question is not applicable as this commission only has the power to conduct a preliminary investigation and cannot sanction.

ARE THE DECISIONS PUBLICLY AVAILABLE?

No – decisions are not publicly available.

SOURCES

Vermont State Ethics Commission, 2018 Annual Report,

<https://ethicscommission.vermont.gov/sites/ethics/files/documents/VT-Ethics-Commission-Annual-Report.pdf>

NOTES

From Annual Report, p. 13, “The ethics commission’s lack of authority to investigate complaints has shown to have substantial impact on the resources of other agencies to which complaints are referred for investigation and response. Amending 3 V.S.A. § 1221 and 1223 to authorize the Commission itself to investigate complaints of alleged violations of governmental conduct regulated by law or the Vermont State Code of Ethics is strongly recommended.”

¹ 2018 Annual Report, p. 13

² 2018 Annual Report, p. 16

³ 2018 Annual Report, p. 16. Nine cases were resolved by the appropriate state agency by a finding of no ethics violation. Two additional cases are still pending.