



2003 ASSEMBLY BILL 958

March 11, 2004 - Introduced by Representative BLACK. Referred to Committee on Rules.

1 **AN ACT** *to renumber* 19.579; *to amend* 19.579 (title) and 19.58 (1) (a); and *to*
2 *create* 19.45 (14), 19.579 (2) and 19.58 (1) (c) of the statutes; **relating to:**
3 restrictions on employment of former commissioners and staff of the Public
4 Service Commission and providing a penalty.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, the commissioners of the Public Service Commission (PSC) are nominated by the governor and, with the advice and consent of the senate, appointed for six-year terms. The PSC regulates public utilities and also regulates, to varying degrees, nonutilities that provide certain telecommunications services. Current law prohibits a commissioner from having a financial interest in a public utility.

This bill provides that, for 24 months after an individual ceases to be a commissioner of the PSC, he or she may not be employed by, serve as a director of, render services to, or assist or participate in the affairs of, any of the following: 1) a person that has been subject to any regulation by the PSC, a subsidiary or affiliate of such a person, or a foundation organized or operated by such a person; or 2) a person that represents the interests of the foregoing persons. Under the bill, a staff member employed by the PSC is subject to the same prohibitions during the 24-month period after he or she ceases to be employed by the PSC.

The bill's prohibitions are created in the code of ethics for state public officials and employees (code). As a result, the Ethics Board may investigate an allegation that an individual has violated a prohibition and may order compliance. In addition,

ASSEMBLY BILL 958

the bill provides that an individual who violates the bill's prohibitions is subject to a forfeiture (civil penalty) of not more than \$50,000, and is also subject to the following criminal penalties: 1) a fine of between \$20,000 and \$50,000; 2) imprisonment for not more than one year; or 3) both a fine and imprisonment.

Because this bill creates a new crime or revises a penalty for an existing crime, the Joint Review Committee on Criminal Penalties may be requested to prepare a report concerning the proposed penalty and the costs or savings that are likely to result if the bill is enacted.

For further information see the *state and local* fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

1 **SECTION 1.** 19.45 (14) of the statutes is created to read:

2 19.45 (14) No commissioner of the public service commission or staff member
3 employed by the commission may, for 24 months following the date on which he or
4 she ceases to be a commissioner or to be employed as a staff member, be employed
5 by, serve as a director of, render services to, or assist or participate in the affairs of,
6 any of the following:

7 (a) A person that has been subject to any regulation by the public service
8 commission, a subsidiary or affiliate of such a person, or a foundation organized or
9 operated by such a person.

10 (b) Any person that represents the interests of a person described in par. (a).

11 **SECTION 2.** 19.579 (title) of the statutes, as created by 2003 Wisconsin Act 39,
12 is amended to read:

13 **19.579 (title) Civil penalty penalties.**

14 **SECTION 3.** 19.579 of the statutes, as created by 2003 Wisconsin Act 39, is
15 renumbered 19.579 (1).

16 **SECTION 4.** 19.579 (2) of the statutes is created to read:

