



THIS STORY HAS BEEN FORMATTED FOR EASY PRINTING

Councilors seek disclosure of finances, by election time The Boston Globe

By John C. Drake, Globe Staff | April 15, 2009

Boston city councilors would have to publicly reveal their outside income, gifts, and investments under an ordinance proposed by two council members who say they and their colleagues should be subject to the same annual disclosure rules as state legislators.

The proposal, by Councilors Rob Consalvo and Stephen J. Murphy, was made in an election year in which two of Mayor Thomas M. Menino's political foes sit on the City Council. But Consalvo, a strong Menino ally, and Murphy said the proposal was not directed at the two mayoral aspirants, Sam Yoon and Michael F. Flaherty.

"Council has worked very hard to shake the image we're not as transparent as we should be," Consalvo said. "I think this is an opportunity to make a small, simple step to show the public we're serious about transparency and openness and will be on the same transparent footing as all of our colleagues in government."

The ordinance, which will be presented at the City Council's meeting today, would require councilors to file with the city clerk an annual statement reporting all income, the amount of interest in any businesses, gifts, and reimbursements received from entities with business before the city, the value of all real estate holdings, and a series of other financial interests.

Similar to state law, the law would require disclosure of ranges of income and investments, as opposed to precise dollar amounts. The measure also would require disclosure of mortgages and debts. Spouses of councilors would also have to disclose sources, but not amounts, of income from entities with business before city government.

Murphy said he wants to see the ordinance passed in time to require councilors to file a 2008 statement by June.

Soon after his election as mayor, Menino filed an executive order in 1994 requiring himself and members of his Cabinet to file annual statements of financial interest.

"In terms of requiring people to disclose what they have and where their assets lie, it's effective in preventing conflict-of-interest problems and ensuring transparency," Murphy said.

Yoon, who said he has no income outside the \$87,500 he makes on the City Council, said he supports the idea. Flaherty, who works as a lawyer with the Boston law firm Adler Pollock & Sheehan, said he would have no problem disclosing his income and other financial interests, saying he has pressed for more transparency from the mayor's office as a candidate.

"This ordinance is important for the health of the city of Boston," he said. But Flaherty said he could not immediately say yesterday what his 2008 income was, because he had not yet filed his income taxes. Today is the deadline to file income taxes.

Council President Michael P. Ross said he also supports the ordinance. Ross, who graduated from Suffolk Law School after being elected to City Council, said he is just beginning to practice law and earned less than \$5,000 last year as a lawyer.

The idea drew praise from Pam Wilmot, executive director of Common Cause Massachusetts, a government watchdog organization.

"Financial disclosure is an important step in providing more information about conflicts of interest that help voters evaluate candidates and the press and others to expose potential problems," she said.

She said the law would be stronger if there were penalties listed for not complying.

Consalvo said penalties will be considered during hearings.

John C. Drake can be reached at jdrake@globe.com. ■

© [Copyright](#) 2009 The New York Times Company