COUNTY AGENDA REQUEST

Department:	Commissioners	Presenter(s):	Chairman Steve Brown
Meeting Date:	Thursday, February 28, 2013	Type of Request:	Consent

Wording for the Agenda:

Approval of Chairman Brown's recommendation to adopt Resolution 2013-04 supporting State Ethics Reform.

Background/History/Details:

Chairman Brown has introduced Resolution 2013-04 concerning the current efforts on State Ethics Reform in the Georgia General Assembly for the Board's consideration.

What action are you seeking from the Board of Commissioners?

Approval of Chairman Brown's recommendation to adopt Resolution 2013-04 supporting State Ethics Reform.

If this item requires funding, please describe:

Not Applicable.

Has this request been considered within the past two years?	No	If so, when?	
Is Audio-Visual Equipment Required for this Request?*	No	Backup Provided with Request?	Yes

**** All audio-visual material must be submitted to the County Clerk's Office no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. It is also your department's responsibility to ensure all third-party audio-visual material is submitted at least 48 hours in advance.***

Approved by Finance	Not Applicable	Reviewed by Legal	
Approved by Purchasing	Not Applicable	County Clerk's Approval	Yes
Administrator's Approval			

Staff Notes:

County of Fayette;
State of Georgia

RESOLUTION 2013-04

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF STATE ETHICS REFORM

WHEREAS, The citizens of Fayette County, both Republican and Democrat have asked for meaningful State ethics reform legislation; and

WHEREAS, Reasonable limits should be placed on all gifts from lobbyists to public officers in Georgia, and would include such limits and public disclosure on the public officer's staff, as well as family members; and

WHEREAS, A total of 136 candidates for Georgia's General Assembly from both political parties made the pledge to co-sponsor legislation that will read "It shall be unlawful for a lobbyist to make a gift to a public officer where the value of the gift is more than $100.00," but HB 142 allows for unlimited spending when lobbyists provide gifts to groups of public officers like an entire county commission, city council, boards of education and even subcommittees of the General Assembly as well as unlimited spending on travel related to the undefined term "official duties;" and

WHEREAS, In the July 2012 primary elections, 1,251,601 Georgians voted in favor of limiting such gifts in a non-binding ballot question; specifically, a $100 cap was supported by 87.21% of Republican voters, while 72.55% of Democratic voters supported a similarly worded ballot question with an unspecified limit; and

WHEREAS, Current Georgia law includes all elected officials at the state and local level in the definition of public officers, but in no way should local elected officials be treated as lobbyists when representing their constituencies in front of the legislature; and

WHEREAS, The definition of "family members" in Georgia law should extend logically beyond just spouses and children; and

WHEREAS, The Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission (hereafter "Commission") was stripped of its rulemaking authority in 2010 by the legislature, lacking the ability to enforce or address situations that are not specifically described by law; meaning if a candidate is not able to file disclosure reports by an established deadline as a result of a system failure by the Commission's website, the Commission must still fine the candidates as written in law; and

WHEREAS, The Commission, the only state agency with oversight authority over legislators, must have a source of independent, dedicated funding; preventing the legislature from reducing the Commission's budget out of political retaliation; and

WHEREAS, Legislators should disclose campaign contributions received between January 1 and the start of the legislative session each year; disclosing large sums of campaign contributions from special interest groups or individuals made before the session begins;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Board of Commissioners of Fayette County does hereby formally request sound State ethics reform, reflecting the desires of Georgia's citizens with full accountability and without the possibility of defunding or retaliating against the Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission.

So resolved this 28th day of February 2013, by the

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FAYETTE COUNTY, GEORGIA

Attest:

_____
Steve Brown, Chairman

_____
Floyd L. Jones, County Clerk