

June 17, 2007  
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### **Most folks still think Louisiana politicians are for sale, or at least for rent**

Nearly 30 years ago, then state Sen. Ned Randolph, who later became Alexandria's mayor, made headlines when he proposed a "glass pockets" bill.

It died quickly in the state Senate, of course, where only a handful of good-government senators dared vote for it.

After all, this is a Legislature that operates a government-by-special-interests: insurance agents serve on the insurance committee, farmers on the agriculture committee, all in the name of putting folks who know something about a subject matter in place to influence laws.

Then along came Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the state's reputation for political corruption took center stage in Washington and around the country. Around the country, folks were openly talking about sleazy Louisiana politicians. Most folks still think all politicians are for sale, or at least for rent, around here...

This year, glass pockets legislation has gained legs.

The primary reason is the formation of LaEthics1 ([www.laethics1.com](http://www.laethics1.com)), founded by the Greater Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce and 51 other state chambers, business and civic groups, that have made income disclosure a top priority.

The theory behind income disclosure is that it would be far easier for the public and watchdog groups to see potential conflicts of interest. You would probably see a lot more legislators recusing themselves from voting. The public's right to better government trumps the right to privacy here; if you want to be molding public policy at the state government level — where all the alleged corruption exists — you ought to be willing to disclose your personal economic interest.

But while bills are pending in both the House and Senate, it's not very popular legislation, and legislators are trying to kill it by overloading it. They are insisting on making it applicable to all 3,000 elected officials in the state, not just the 144 legislators and nine statewide elected officials are envisioned.

If you want to voice an opinion on this legislation, call your state senator at (225) 342-2040 Monday morning.