

ADVISORY OPINION 21-05

Advisory Opinion 21-05 is in response to an Application filed by an employee who has authored a book, which they sell to consumers and organizations. Baltimore County Public Schools (“BCPS”) has not purchased the publication. As part of the publications marketing, the employee speaks or is a panelist at conferences and similar meetings. The employee is not paid for their presentations.

Because the employee is not engaged in any commerce and receives no compensation, gifts or other remuneration, there is no existing issue. Specifically, there is no conflict and no requirement to disclose. The Petitioner is not engaged in commerce with the professional organization.

The Petitioner seeks an opinion regarding prospective paid speaking engagements. The panel is unable to provide an opinion because the request involves too many unknowns such as, whether the organization paying the employee does business with BCPS.

The employee is encouraged to seek an Advisory Opinion should they receive compensation for their future speaking engagements.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, for the reasons set forth above, the Panel has concluded that the employee may continue their unpaid speaking engagements.

This opinion has been adopted by the Ethics Review Panel members on June 15, 2021.

Ralph Sapia, Esq.
Chair

Tim Topoleski, Ph.D.
Vice Chair

Cynthia Boyd, M.D., M.P.H.
Panel Member

Owen Jarvis, Esq.
Panel Member

Thomas Keech, Esq.
Panel Member