



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 27, 2018

**CONTACT:** Carol Carson, (860) 263-2384  
[Carol.carson@ct.gov](mailto:Carol.carson@ct.gov)

## **STATEMENT OF THE CITIZEN'S ETHICS ADVISORY BOARD REGARDING PUBLIC ACT NO. 18-175**

Since 1994, state ethics rulings have made clear that supervision of one family member by another is prohibited by the Code of Ethics. A recent amendment to the Code, which took place in darkness in the waning days of the legislative session, turned that on its head. The Office of State Ethics was not consulted about this change or its broader ramifications.

This new legislation is an affront to all Connecticut citizens. It was designed to allow University of Connecticut Football Coach Randy Edsall's son Corey to work as his assistant football coach. But the legislation went beyond that – in what the *Hartford Courant* accurately termed an “abuse of power,” it gutted a significant portion of the ethics oversight of the entire state higher education system for the benefit of just two state employees: Coach Edsall and his son.

This change weakens the Code of Ethics by opening the door to nepotism not just in the football program but throughout Connecticut state universities and community colleges as well as the University of Connecticut. It also establishes a double standard permitting nepotism in the state college and university system while continuing to prohibit it throughout the rest of state government. And make no mistake, taxpayers will bear the cost of this erosion of accountability.

The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board, an independent, non-partisan watchdog agency made up of nine citizens from throughout Connecticut, is outraged by this wholesale stripping of its authority to interpret and enforce the Codes of Ethics. We urge the legislature to remove this unethical and unacceptable legislative amendment and restore independent ethical oversight over the state's higher education system at the earliest possible time.

It is the mission of the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board to ensure that all state employees and public officials, no matter how powerful and connected, are held to the same ethical standards. This backroom deal among some of the highest-ranking state officials and one of the highest-paid state employees is a shocking disregard for integrity and transparency.

Nepotism should not be given license to flourish on the taxpayer's dime and covert legislative action should not be tolerated.

Signed by the Members of the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board,

Dena M. Castricone, Chair  
Mary Bigelow  
Charles F. Chiusano

N. Beth Cook  
Jason Farrell  
Richard Lang

Cheryl Lipson  
Nichelle Mullins

*The Connecticut Office of State Ethics mission is to ensure honesty, integrity and accountability in state government through education, interpretation and enforcement of the State of Connecticut Code of Ethics. To contact us please visit our website at [www.ct.gov/ethics](http://www.ct.gov/ethics) or call us at (860) 263-2400.*