

North Carolina Legislative Black Caucus Foundation, Inc.
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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As chair of the North Carolina Legislative Black Caucus Foundation, I have worked over the past twelve months (the first year of my term) to ensure that the Foundation's operations are proper and in order. The Foundation has sought and received excellent financial, ethical and legal advice to guide this process.

Consistent with my own business practices and to address issues raised publicly about the Foundation, we have taken the following actions:

1. The Foundation has added additional members, all non-legislators, to its Board of Directors. The Foundation's Board is now comprised of 21 members. A majority of these Board members (13 of 21) are private citizens who do not serve as legislators and are not members of the Legislative Black Caucus.
2. At my request, the Foundation retained a firm of Certified Public Accountants to audit its 2005 and 2006 records. We have implemented its recommendations regarding our internal controls and paperwork, and will obtain annual audits to ensure their effectiveness going forward.
3. The Foundation has engaged another CPA firm to provide professional accounting services on an ongoing basis and further guarantee the integrity of the Foundation's controls and paperwork.
4. The Foundation has adopted policies regarding annual scholarship awards for students that expressly exclude Board members, Foundation staff, legislators and their respective families from consideration.
5. The Foundation has adopted a new Conflict of Interest Policy to address any potential conflicts involving Foundation members or staff.

6. As Foundation and Caucus chair, I sought (Feb. 2007) and have recently received (Dec. 2007) an advisory opinion from the State Ethics Commission and the Legislative Ethics Committee regarding: lobbyist's and legislator's service on the Foundation Board; their fundraising activity for the Foundation; and the interaction regarding legislators and lobbyists as members of the Foundation Board. The advisory opinion confirms that both lobbyists and legislators can serve on the Foundation Board. Although the opinion indicates that legislators cannot be in the majority on the Board, the Foundation has previously expanded its Board from 11 to 21 members and the majority of those members (13) are not legislators.

As chair of the North Carolina Legislative Black Caucus Foundation, I have worked to ensure that the Foundation operates with sound internal controls and that appropriate policies and procedures are in place. With these additional controls, policies and procedures in place, the Foundation looks forward to continuing its work supporting academic excellence and scholarship and empowering communities and others as they strive to realize their promise.