

MINUTES OF JUNE 9, 2026 MEETING
OF THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
225 E. STATE STREET, 5TH FLOOR EAST
10 a.m.

Present: Chair Stephanie Brown, Commissioner Carrie Parikh, Commissioner Peter Stokes, Commissioner Jacquelyn Suarez, Acting Executive Director Shamecca Bernardini, Acting Deputy Director Rachel Eger, Assistant Attorney General Rachel Doobrajh and members of the Commission staff.

I. CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIR BROWN

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:02 a.m. by Chair Brown. The Chair announced that adequate notice of the date, time and place of the meeting had been provided to the Office of the Secretary of State on December 18, 2025, to be posted prominently on a board reserved for such announcements. On the same date, identical notices of the meeting date were distributed to two major newspapers in New Jersey.

II. MINUTES OF THE APRIL 21, 2026 MEETING

Commission members had no changes to the April 21, 2026 Minutes, which were approved unanimously on motion of Commissioner Parikh, seconded by Commissioner Stokes.

III. RECESS OF THE OPEN MEETING

Commissioner Suarez moved that the open session be recessed and that, pursuant to Section 10:4-12(b) of the Open Public Meetings Act, the Commission enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters, matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, and investigations of possible violations of the law. Pursuant to Section 10:4-13(b) of the Act, the discussion conducted in closed session may be disclosed to the public when there is no longer a need to maintain the confidentiality of same. Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion, which was unanimously carried 4 to 0 (Brown, Parikh, Stokes and Suarez).

IV. RECONVENING THE OPEN MEETING

Following the Executive Session, Chair Brown reconvened the open meeting.

V. CASES

**11-23 Report of Preliminary Investigation
Department of Health
Commission Case No. 11-23**

Commissioner Parikh moved that the Commission find indications of violations of the Conflicts Law or Commission Regulations, which merit further action; that a Complaint shall be prepared for filing with the Office of Administrative Law, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 19:61-3.1(h)*; and that the Commission may direct staff to undertake efforts to settle the matter by way of Consent Order prior to the filing of a Complaint. Staff further recommended that the remaining allegations be dismissed. Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion, which was passed 4 to 0 (Brown, Parikh, Stokes and Suarez).

**38-25A George Helmy, Member, Board of Governors
Rutgers University
Request for Exception to Executive Order 14 (Corzine, 2006)
Commission Case No. 38-25A**

Commissioner Parikh moved that the Commission approve the proposed waiver, as the contract between Zoetis Inc. and Rutgers University is subject to the competitive bidding laws applicable to Rutgers. Commissioner Suarez seconded the motion, which was passed 3 to 0 (Brown, Parikh, and Suarez). Commissioner Stokes recused.

**09-26 Report of Preliminary Investigation
Department of Law and Public Safety
Commission Case No. 09-26**

Commissioner Stokes moved that the Commission authorize the Department to proceed with disciplinary action against the individual for violating Section II, paragraph 5 of the UEC and Section V, subsection B paragraphs 1, 4, and 6 of the LPS Supplemental Code of Ethics, as alleged in the materials submitted. Commissioner Parikh seconded the motion, which was passed 4 to 0 (Brown, Parikh, Stokes and Suarez).

**13-26 Report of Preliminary Investigation
Department of Children and Families
Commission Case No. 13-26**

Commissioner Parikh moved that the Commission authorize the Department to proceed with disciplinary action against the individual for violating Section II, paragraphs 4 and 5, and Section III of the UEC, as well as Section E, paragraph 1 and Section G, paragraph 1 of the DCF Supplemental Code of Ethics, as alleged in the materials submitted. Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion, which was passed 4 to 0 (Brown, Parikh, Stokes and Suarez).

**15-26 Report of Preliminary Investigation
Department of Children and Families
Commission Case No. 15-26**

Commissioner Suarez moved that the Commission authorize the Department to proceed with disciplinary action against the individual for violating Section B, paragraph 3 and Section G, paragraph 4 of the DCF Supplemental Code of Ethics, as alleged in the materials submitted. Commissioner Parikh seconded the motion, which was passed 4 to 0 (Brown, Parikh, Stokes and Suarez).

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE

Revision of the Uniform Ethics Code

Commissioner Suarez moved that the Commission approve the addition of UEC Section II, paragraph 9 to reflect Advisory Opinion No. 45, which permits State employees who are designated caregivers to represent their family member before a State agency and to seek benefits or services on their own behalf from an agency by which they are employed, in the same manner as the public. Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion, which was passed 4 to 0 (Brown, Parikh, Stokes and Suarez).

Commissioner Parikh moved that the Commission approve revisions to UEC Sections VI, VII, and XIV for consistency with PL2025, c.325 effective April 20, 2026 changes to Section 17 of the Conflicts of Interest Law, which modifies the definition of a “person” related to cannabis activity and permits immediate family members of State officials and “persons” to hold directly or indirectly, an interest in, or represent, appear for, or negotiate on behalf of the holder of, or apply for, a medical cannabis permit holder, applicant, or entity, of personal use cannabis license holder, applicant, or entity if, in the judgement of the State Ethics Commission, such employment will not interfere with the responsibilities of the person and will not create a conflict of interest or reasonable risk of public perception of a conflict of interest. Suarez seconded the motion, which was passed 4 to 0 (Brown, Parikh, Stokes and Suarez)

Casino Waiver Consent

Commissioner Stokes moved that the Commission approve casino employment waivers for Morgan (Stockton), McAlister (DEP) and Gomez-Hewitt (DOC). Commissioner Parikh seconded the motion, which was passed 4 to 0 (Brown Parikh, Stokes and Suarez).

Cannabis Waiver Consent

Commissioner Parikh moved that the Commission approve cannabis employment and/or representation waivers for Painter (DOH), Gillard (DCF), McCormick (DCF), Cole (EDA) and Balani (DHS). Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion, which was passed 4 to 0 (Brown, Parikh, Stokes and Suarez).

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Parikh moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Suarez seconded the motion, which was unanimously carried.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Shanna Cook, Executive Assistant
State Ethics Commission
Date: July 22, 2026