

**Formal Advisory Opinion
No. 14 of 2009**

Joint Legislative Committee on Ethical Standards

Resolution

Ethics Counsel's Question 10 reads as follows:

Section 2:14 of the Legislative Code of Ethics requires financial disclosure forms to be completed each year by members of the Legislature. Members are required to disclose information for themselves, their spouse and minor children. The term "minor child" is not defined. Should this term be interpreted strictly as children under 18 years of age or should it be interpreted more broadly to mean dependent children?

Whereas, N.J.S.A. 9:17B-1.a. states the general rule that 18 years of age is the age of majority in New Jersey;

Whereas, the phrase "minor children's" in §2:14.a. of the Legislative Code of Ethics (Code) is not a defined term;

Whereas, other definitions in the Code and the Conflicts of Interest Law (N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12 et seq.) are not helpful in defining the phrase "minor children's;"

Be it resolved, that the phrase "minor children's" as used in Code §2:14.a. is interpreted to mean under 18 years of age regardless of the residence of the child, which interpretation counsel is authorized to include in the instructions for the Financial Disclosure Statements and on the Statements themselves; and

Be it further resolved, that in the event a member of the Legislature does not have access to the information required to be disclosed by §2:14, the Legislator shall so state on the member's Financial Disclosure Statement in the appropriate section.