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# CAMPAIGN FINANCE GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATES

(INCLUDES FAQs, STATUTES AND RULES)



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**CAMPAIGN  
FINANCE  
FAQS**

**1. Who must file Campaign Financial Disclosure Statements?**

**PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES.** Any individual who receives contributions or makes expenditures (except for incidental expenditures) to determine if he or she will be a candidate for state or local public office is required to report to the appropriate agency. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(3)

**ANNOUNCED CANDIDATES.** Any individual who has made a formal announcement of his or her candidacy for a state or local elected public office or who has formally qualified to seek election to public office in a primary or general election in Tennessee is required to report to the appropriate agency. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(3)

**CANDIDATES EXEMPTED.** A local candidate may be exempt from the Campaign Financial Disclosure Act's requirements if he or she is seeking a public office for which the service is part-time and for which the compensation is less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per month. This exemption does not apply if the public office being sought is that of a chief administrative officer or if the candidate spends more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) seeking election to the public office. T.C.A. § 2-10-101(b)

**2. Where must candidates file reports?**

**CANDIDATES FOR STATE PUBLIC OFFICE.** Candidates and single-candidate political campaign committees involved in elections for state public offices (Governor, member of the General Assembly, delegate to a Tennessee Constitutional Convention, District Attorney General, District Public Defender, Judge of the Court of Criminal Appeals, Judge of the Court of Appeals, Supreme Court Justice, Chancellor, Circuit Court Judge, Criminal Court Judge and Probate Court Judge) must file all required reports with the Registry of Election Finance, 404 James Robertson Parkway, Suite 104, Nashville, TN 37243-1360. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(a)

**CANDIDATES FOR LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICE.** Candidates or single-candidate political campaign committees involved in elections for local public offices (all offices not listed above as state public offices) must file all required reports with the election commission of the county or counties where the election will be held. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(b)

**3. What must a candidate do to begin a campaign operation?**

**POLITICAL CAMPAIGN TREASURERS.** Before any monies can be received or spent, (except for incidental expenditures made by an individual to determine whether to be a candidate), each candidate must certify the name and address of its political treasurer to the Registry of Election Finance for a state election and to the county election commission for a local election. This is accomplished by completing and filing an appointment of political treasurer statement. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(3) and T.C.A. § 2-10-105(4)(e)(1)

A candidate may appoint himself or herself as the political treasurer for a campaign. If a candidate appoints another person to act as political treasurer, the candidate must co-sign all reports required to be filed under the Campaign Financial Disclosure Act. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(4)(e)(1)

**CAMPAIGN BANK ACCOUNT.** A candidate must open and maintain a separate bank account into which all campaign contributions are to be deposited. Additionally, all expenditures from campaign funds must be expended from this bank account. Rule 0530-1-1-.01(1), Rule 0530-1-1-.02(1) and Rule 0530-1-1-.02(4)

If a person is a candidate for more than one public office, the candidate must maintain separate campaign bank accounts for each office sought. Rule 0530-1-3-.02(3)(a)

**4. How long is an appointment of treasurer statement effective?**

**CANDIDATES - PRIMARY, GENERAL ELECTIONS.** A political treasurer appointed by a candidate or single-candidate political campaign committee may serve for both the primary and general elections. After the last election in which that candidate or committee is involved in that election year, monies shall not be received or spent for a future election until the candidate or committee has formally appointed a political treasurer for the future election year and filed a report of that appointment with the Registry of Election Finance or the appropriate county election commission. (The new appointment must be filed, even if the treasurer is the same individual who served in that capacity in the candidate's previous election.) T.C.A. § 2-10-105(g)

**CHANGE OF TREASURERS.** Candidates must notify the Registry or the appropriate county election commission of any changes in the office of political treasurer. An appointment of political treasurer statement must be completed and filed for the individual who replaces the previous treasurer.

## **5. What information must be reported in a campaign financial disclosure statement?**

**CONTRIBUTIONS.** A reportable contribution is defined by the law as being “any advance, conveyance, deposit, distribution, transfer of funds, loan, loan guaranty, personal funds of a candidate, payment, gift, or subscription, of money or like thing of value, and any contract, agreement, promise or other obligation. . . .made for the purpose of influencing a measure or nomination for election or the election of any person for public office.” Additionally, any of these items given to an officeholder "for the purpose of defraying any expenses. . . .incurred in connection with the performance of the officeholder's duties, responsibilities, or constituent services" are reportable as contributions. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(4)

**IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.** In-kind contributions are goods or services provided to a candidate without charge (such as the use of equipment or advertisement materials at no cost to the candidate) and must be listed separately on the campaign financial disclosure statement from other campaign contributions. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(c)(1) and Rule 0530-1-1-.03(6)

An in-kind contribution is considered to be made and is reportable during the period in which the contribution is made or performed, not when the cost of the contribution is billed or paid. The amount for an in-kind contribution which should be reported by a candidate should be the fair market value for such goods or services provided. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(d)

If the actual cost of a in-kind contribution is not known at the time when it is reportable, an estimate of the cost shall be reported during the period that the contribution is made or performed, and the disclosure report shall indicate that the amount reported is estimated. If the actual cost of the in-kind contribution as indicated on the bill for the goods or services is different than the amount reported, the candidate shall adjust the amount reported on a later disclosure statement covering the period in which payment for the in-kind contribution is made. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(d)

**EXPENDITURES.** A reportable expenditure is defined by statute as “a purchase, payment, distribution, loan, advance, deposit or gift of money or anything of value made for the purpose of influencing a measure or the nomination for election or election of any person to public office.” T.C.A. § 2-10-102(6)(A)

**LOANS.** A campaign loan must be disclosed by a candidate during the reporting period that the loan is made. A loan must continue to be disclosed on future campaign financial disclosure statements until the loan is paid back in full or a statement has been filed with the appropriate campaign financial disclosure statement by the candidate stating that the loan will not be repaid and is to be considered a contribution to the campaign. Rule 0530-1-1-.06(1) and Rule 0530-1-1-.06(2)

**OBLIGATIONS.** Goods and services received on credit which are not paid for during the reporting period received must be disclosed as an obligation by the candidate during the reporting period that the obligation is incurred. This obligation must continue to be disclosed by the candidate or committee on campaign financial disclosure statements until fully paid. Payments on the obligation shall be disclosed as expenditures by the candidate on the appropriate campaign financial disclosure statement(s). Rule 0530-1-1-.10(1)

## **6. What details are required in campaign financial disclosure statements?**

**Short Form.** Candidates are exempt from filing a detailed disclosure statement if neither contributions received nor expenditures made during a reporting period for which a statement is submitted exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000). The candidate must report the balance of contributions on hand, outstanding loans and outstanding obligations. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(a)(1)

**Detailed Disclosure.** A candidate which has over one thousand dollars (\$1,000) in contributions and/or expenditures must complete a detailed disclosure and list contributions, expenditures, loans and obligations as described below. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(2)(A)(i)

**Contributions.** Contributions totaling one hundred dollars (\$100) or less from a single source during the reporting period may be totaled and reported as a single item. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(2)(A)(i)

Candidates are required to list the full name, complete address, amount, date of receipt of contribution, and the election the contribution is designated for, for each person or organization who contributes a total of more than one hundred dollars (\$100) during a reporting period. In addition, if this contribution is from an individual you must also list the occupation and employer of the contributor. A candidate that makes a "best effort" to obtain the address, occupation and employer for a contribution is considered to be in compliance with the requirement. "Best Effort" would include requesting the information on an invitation and stating that the information is required by state law for contributions over \$100 or requesting the information in a letter sent by first class postage and stating that the information is required by state law for contributions over \$100. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(a)(2)(A)(i)

For example, a person who contributes fifty dollars (\$50) one day, fifty dollars (\$50) the following day and one dollar (\$1) the next day would have to be specifically listed on the campaign financial disclosure statement as having contributed one hundred one dollars (\$101), if all those monies were contributed during one reporting period. Likewise, a person who buys five (5) tickets to a campaign fundraiser at twenty-five dollars (\$25) each would have to be specifically listed on the campaign financial disclosure statement

as having contributed one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125). A contributor may designate his/her contribution to a candidate by indicating in writing the specific election to which the contribution is intended to apply.

**Expenditures.** Expenditures totaling one hundred dollars (\$100) or less to a single payee during the reporting period are not required to be itemized. These expenditures may be broken down and totaled by general categories (such as gas, food, etc.). For example, purchases of twenty-five dollars (\$25) of gas at five different service stations would be shown as "Gas -- \$125". T.C.A. § 2-10-107(a)(2)(B)

The law requires candidates to list the full name, complete address, amount and detailed purpose for each person or organization to whom a total of more than one hundred dollars (\$100) was paid during a reporting period. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(a)(2)(B)

When a purchase is made with a credit card, the purchase must be disclosed as a payment to the vendor (not the credit card company). For example, if printing is purchased from ABC Printing with a credit card, the payee must be listed as ABC Printing. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(a)(2)(B)

Purchases of goods and services must be disclosed as a purchase from the actual vendor and not as a purchase from a third party who is reimbursed for the purchase. For example, if a campaign worker goes to ABC Printing and pays for printing and is then reimbursed by the campaign for the printing, the disclosure must list ABC Printing as the vendor and not the campaign worker. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(a)(2)(B)

When listing the purpose of an expenditure, the words "reimbursement", "credit card purchase", "other" and "campaign expenditure" may not be used as the purpose. The purpose must be detailed enough to show that the expenditure was an allowable expenditure. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(a)(2)(B)

**Loans.** Itemized information must be provided for all loans for more than one hundred dollars (\$100) from one creditor during a reporting period. This information includes the full name and address of each creditor, and the date that the loan was made must be provided. In addition, any endorsers or guarantors for a loan must be listed by full name and address and the amount of the loan which is guaranteed by that person must be disclosed. The outstanding loan balance at the beginning of the reporting period, any additional loans received during that period, any loan payments made during the period and the outstanding loan balance at the end of the reporting period must also be disclosed. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(a)(2)(A)(i)

**Obligations.** All obligations owed at the end of a reporting period for more than one hundred dollars (\$100) to one creditor must be itemized. The itemized information includes the full name and address of the creditor. In addition, the outstanding obligations' balance at the beginning of the reporting period, any additional obligations' incurred during the period, any payments made to the creditor during the period and the outstanding obligations balance at the end of the reporting period must be disclosed.

## **7. What campaign financial disclosure statements may a candidate have to file?**

Below is a list of campaign financial disclosure reports that may be required to be filed by a state or local candidate. The reports a candidate is required to file will depend on the office sought and the date that an appointment of a political treasurer statement is filed with the Registry of Election Finance or the local county election commission. In order to view the specific reports required for your current election, please refer to the Registry's website or contact your local county election commission.

**Early Semi-Annual Supplemental.** If a candidate appoints a political treasurer before January 16 in the year of the election in which the candidate or committee expects to be involved, the candidate or committee must file early supplemental campaign financial disclosure statements by January 31 and July 15 of each year preceding the election. The early supplemental report must cover the period beginning with the date of the first contribution or first expenditure, whichever is earlier, or the date of the last early supplemental report. The ending dates of the reporting periods are January 15 and June 30 of each year. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(c)(3)

The early semi-annual supplemental report does not need to be filed if it is within sixty (60) days of another report required under the Campaign Financial Disclosure Act. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(c)(3)

**1st Quarter.** This campaign financial disclosure statement must be filed no later than April 10. The ending date of this report will be March 31. The beginning date of this report will be depend upon several factors, including, the office the candidate is seeking, whether this is the candidate's first report and when the candidate filed an Appointment of Political Treasurer Statement. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(c)(1)

**2nd Quarter.** This campaign financial disclosure statement must be filed no later than July 10. The ending date of this report will be June 30. The beginning date of this report will be depend upon several factors, including, the office the candidate is seeking, whether this is the candidate's first report and when the candidate filed an Appointment of Political Treasurer Statement. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(c)(1)

**3rd Quarter.** This campaign financial disclosure statement must be filed no later than October 10. The ending date of this report will be September 30. The beginning date of this report will be depend upon several factors, including, the office the candidate is seeking, whether this is the candidate's first report and when the candidate filed an Appointment of Political Treasurer Statement. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(c)(1)

**4th Quarter.** This campaign financial disclosure statement must be filed no later than January 25. The ending date of this report will be January 15. The beginning date of this report will be depend upon several factors, including, the office the candidate is seeking, whether this is the candidate's first report and when the candidate filed an Appointment of Political Treasurer Statement. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(c)(1)

**Pre-Primary.** A campaign financial disclosure statement must be filed no later than seven (7) days before the primary election. The ending date of this report will be ten (10) days before the primary election. The beginning date of this report will be depend upon several factors, including, the office the candidate is seeking, whether this is the candidate's first report and when the candidate filed an Appointment of Political Treasurer Statement. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(c)(1)

**Pre-General.** A campaign financial disclosure statement must be filed no later than seven (7) days before the general election. The ending date of this report will be ten (10) days before the general election. The beginning date of this report will be depend upon several factors, including, the office the candidate is seeking, whether this is the candidate's first report and when the candidate filed an Appointment of Political Treasurer Statement. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(c)(1)

**Semi-Annual Supplemental.** If a candidate shows an unexpended balance of contributions, continuing debts and obligations, or an expenditure deficit on their 4th Quarter report, the candidate must file a semi-annual supplemental campaign financial disclosure report by January 31 and July 15 each year until the campaign account is closed. The ending dates of the reporting periods are January 15 and June 30 of each year. T.C.A. § 2-10-106(a)

**Note:** "Filed" means the date that the Registry or county election commission actually receives the candidate or committee's disclosure statement or the date of the postmark, if the statement is mailed by either certified or registered mail. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(7)

### **8. Does the Registry have electronic filing for state candidates?**

The Registry began offering electronic filing with the 2004 August election. The electronic filing system is an Internet based software maintained by the Registry. When a state candidate files an Appointment of Treasurer Statement with the Registry, they will receive an ID and Password that will allow them to file electronically. T.C.A. § 2-10-211

### **9. What reports are required if there is a runoff election?**

A runoff election will require the candidate or committee involved in the election to file at least one additional campaign financial disclosure statement. The following reports must be filed:

**Pre-Runoff.** A campaign financial disclosure statement must be filed no later than seven (7) days before the runoff election, reporting all contributions and expenditures from the last day of any prior report through the tenth (10th) day before the election. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(c)(2)

**Additional Reports.** The candidate or committee involved in the runoff election will also be required to continue to file semi-annual supplemental campaign financial disclosure reports as long as the campaign account is open. Please see Question 7 for additional information on these reports. T.C.A. § 2-10-106(a)

### **10. Will a candidate receive notice when a disclosure report is due?**

The Registry of Election Finance is required to notify candidates for state public office fourteen (14) days before any regularly scheduled statement is due and each county election commission is required to notify candidates for local public office seven (7) days before any regularly scheduled statement is due. T.C.A. § 2-10-103(a)(4) and T.C.A. § 2-10-206(a)(9)

### **11. Are candidates required to file a report during the final days of an election?**

**Interim Report.** An interim report is required for major contributions during the final days before an election. Such a report must be filed if a candidate or single-candidate political campaign committee for state public office or a single-measure political campaign committee in a statewide referendum receives a contribution or loan of more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) from a single source in the period beginning at midnight of the tenth (10th) day prior to any election and extending through midnight of election day. Such a report also is due if a candidate or single-candidate committee for local public office or single-measure committee involved in a

local referendum receives a contribution or loan of more than twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2,500) during that final campaign period. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(h)(1)(A)

Such reports must be filed by the end of the next business day following the day on which the contribution was received. The interim report must be filed by telegram, fax machine, hand delivery or overnight delivery. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(h)(2)

**12. What activities are not campaign contributions?**

The following are NOT campaign contributions and are not required to be reported:

- a) **Volunteer Work.** Services, including expenses provided without compensation by a candidate, or any individuals who volunteer a portion or all of their time on behalf of a candidate are not contributions. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(4)(A)
- b) **Publicity.** Not included within the meaning of contribution is any news story, commentary or editorial distributed through the facilities of any broadcasting station, newspaper, magazine or other periodical publication, unless such facilities are owned wholly or in part or controlled by a political party, political committee or candidate. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(4)(B)
- c) **Voter Registration Efforts.** Any nonpartisan activity designed to encourage individuals to vote or to register to vote is not considered a campaign contribution. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(4)(C)
- d) **Internal Communications.** Not included within the meaning of contribution is any written, oral or electronically transmitted communication by any membership organization or corporation to its members or stockholders, if such membership organization or corporation is not organized primarily for the purpose of influencing the nomination for election or election of any person to public office. However, if the organization or corporation simply finances the dissemination, distribution or republication in whole or in part of campaign materials prepared by the candidate or candidate’s committee, then such financing shall be considered a campaign contribution. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(4)(D)
- e) **Other Candidate-Related Activities.** Not included within the meaning of contribution is the use of real or personal property and the cost of invitations, food and beverages not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100), voluntarily provided on an individual’s residential premises for candidate-related activities. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(4)(E)

**13. Are there any dollar limitations on the amount of campaign contributions that a candidate may accept from a person or a PAC?**

Pursuant to the Campaign Contribution Limits Act of 1995, T.C.A. 2-10-301, *et seq.*, there are limits on how much monies that a person or a PAC may contribute to a candidate’s campaign per election and how much monies that a candidate may accept for an election from a person or PAC. Those dollar limitations are based on the office sought by the candidate. Those limits are as follows:

<u>OFFICE SOUGHT</u>	<u>PERSON</u>	<u>PAC</u>	<u>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PACS (EXCLUDES POLITICAL PARTY PACS<sup>1</sup>)</u>	<u>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM POLITICAL PARTY PACS<sup>1</sup></u>
Statewide Office (Governor)	\$4,200	\$12,300	50% of total contributions	\$409,700
State Senate	\$1,600	\$12,300	\$122,900	\$65,500
State Rep /All Other State <sup>2</sup> and Local Offices	\$1,600	\$8,100	\$122,900	\$32,900

<sup>1</sup> Political Party PACs include those committees controlled by a political party on the national, state or local level and caucuses of a political party established by members of either house of the General Assembly. T.C.A. § 2-10-302

<sup>2</sup> Other State Offices includes Criminal Court Judges, Circuit Court Judges, Chancellors, Probate Court Judges, District Attorney Generals and Public Defenders. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(13)

For purposes of dollar limitations, a primary election, general election, run-off election or special election are each considered a separate election with separate contribution limits. For example, a candidate for state senate in the August primary election could accept \$1,500 from John Doe, and if the candidate also runs in the general election, he/she could accept another \$1,500 from John Doe for the general election.



**14. What is included as a contribution for purposes of the contribution limitations?**

Campaign contributions made by cash or a written instrument, such as a check, would be subject to the contribution limitations of the law, as well as in-kind contributions. Loans may also be considered a campaign contribution and subject to the contribution limits (see below and question 15.)

A person who endorses or guarantees a candidate's campaign loan shall be considered to have made a contribution, subject to the contribution limitations, to the candidate's campaign in the amount of the endorsement or guaranty. Where the portion of the loan for which the endorser or guarantor is liable is not specified in the written agreement, each endorser or guarantor shall be considered to have made a contribution in that proportion of the unpaid balance that each endorser or guarantor bears to the total number of endorsers or guarantors.

A person making a loan to a candidate from their personal monies shall be considered to have made a contribution, subject to the contribution limitations, in the amount of the outstanding loan. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(4)

**15. What is not included as a contribution for purposes of the contribution limitations?**

The limitations do not apply to the retention or transfer of funds by a candidate to his/her own campaign from surplus funds from another campaign of the candidate. (Please remember that a candidate shall not transfer funds from a local campaign account to a legislative or gubernatorial campaign account.)

The limitations do not apply to a contribution, including a loan, made by a candidate to his/her own campaign.

A loan obtained by a candidate from a financial institution is not subject to the dollar limitations if the loan meets the following criteria: T.C.A. § 2-10-304

- a) Is made in the ordinary course of business;
- b) Is made on a basis reasonably designated to assure repayment, evidenced by a written instrument and subject to a payment due date or amortization schedule; and
- c) Bears the usual and customary interest rate of the lending institution.

**16. What are the restrictions on the accepting of campaign contributions?**

**Cash Contributions.** No person may make cash contributions to any candidate, in the aggregate that exceeds \$50.00 per election. PACs may not make cash contributions to candidates. T.C.A. § 2-10-311(a), T.C.A. § 2-10-311(b) and T.C.A. § 2-10-311(c)

**Blackout Periods.** From the convening of the General Assembly in organizational session through the earlier of June 1 or the last day of regular session in odd numbered years and from the convening of regular legislative session to the earlier of May 15 or the conclusion of annual session in even numbered years and from the convening of an extraordinary session through the conclusion of extraordinary session, the governor or a legislator may not have a fundraiser or solicit or accept contributions for the governor or legislator's benefit or for the benefit of another legislative candidate or gubernatorial candidate, a political party legislative caucus PAC or any member of a political party legislative caucus PAC. T.C.A. § 2-10-310(a)(1)

Additionally, from the convening of the General Assembly in organizational session through the earlier of June 1 or the last day of regular session in odd numbered years and from the convening of regular legislative session to the earlier of May 15 or the conclusion of annual session in even numbered years and from the convening of an extraordinary session through the conclusion of extraordinary session, a political party PAC is prohibited from conducting a fundraiser, soliciting or accepting campaign contributions for the benefit of a legislative candidate, gubernatorial candidate, a caucus or any caucus member. T.C.A. § 2-10-310(b)

An employer of a lobbyist or a PAC controlled by an employer of a lobbyist is prohibited from making a campaign contribution to a gubernatorial or legislative candidate during regular or extraordinary legislative session (this restriction is found in the lobbying statutes). T.C.A. § 3-6-304

During the nine (9) day period prior to any election day, a PAC is prohibited from making a campaign contribution to a candidate for state or local public office, unless the committee is a political party PAC. T.C.A. § 2-10-117

**17. Are corporate campaign contributions allowed?**

Yes, beginning on June 1, 2011 corporate contributions are allowed to be made to candidates and PACs in Tennessee.

Corporations making campaign contributions totaling over \$1,000 in the aggregate to candidates in a calendar year must register as a PAC and file campaign financial disclosure reports.

**18. Can a candidate use funds from a previous election for a subsequent election?**

All state and local candidates may transfer unexpended campaign funds to a future campaign for the same office by that candidate. State candidates may transfer any excess campaign funds to any future state or local campaign that the candidate establishes. Local candidates may transfer excess campaign funds only to future local campaigns that the candidate establishes. T.C.A. § 2-10-114

**19. Are there any restrictions on the use of campaign contributions by candidates?**

**GENERALLY.** A candidate for an elected public office is prohibited from using any campaign funds prior to, during or after an election for the candidate's own personal use. Personal use is defined as any use of funds that would require the candidate or official to treat the use as gross income under Section 61 of the IRS Code of 1986. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(b)(1)

Whether an expenditure of campaign funds by a candidate is made for a political purpose depends upon all the facts and circumstances surrounding the expenditure. An activity engaged in between elections by a candidate which is directly related to and supports the selection, nomination or election of that individual to public office is considered political activity. An expense which would be incurred by an individual regardless of that person's candidacy for public office is considered an expenditure for a nonpolitical purpose, except as allowed for the expenditure of surplus contributions.

**ALLOWABLE USES.** A candidate with surplus campaign funds from an election shall allocate unexpended funds to one (1) or more of the following:

a.) The funds may be retained or transferred to any campaign fund pursuant to Tennessee's reporting requirements, except a candidate for local office shall not transfer surplus funds from such an account to a campaign account for the General Assembly or governor. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(a)(1)

b.) The funds may be returned to any or all of the candidate's contributors as set forth in a formula or plan specified in the candidate's disclosure of the allocation. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(a)(2)

c.) The funds may be distributed to the executive committee of the candidate's political party. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(a)(3)

d.) The monies may be deposited by the candidate in the volunteer public education trust fund. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(a)(4)

e.) The funds may be distributed to any organization as described in 26 U.S.C. 170(c). (Examples - church, schools, school booster clubs, veterans organizations.) T.C.A. § 2-10-114(a)(5)

f.) The monies may be distributed to any organization which has received a determination of exemption from federal income taxation pursuant to subsection (3) or (4) of 26 U.S.C. 501(c), if such organization is currently operating under such exemption. (Section 501(c)(3) includes any non-profit organization that operates exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, public safety testing, literacy, or educational purposes, or to foster national or amateur sport competition, or for the prevention of cruelty to children or animals. Section 501(c)(4) covers any non-profit civic organization operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare and also includes certain local employee associations when the associations' net earnings are devoted to charitable, educational or recreational purposes.) T.C.A. § 2-10-114(a)(6)

g.) The funds may be used to defray any ordinary and necessary expenses incurred in connection with the office of the officeholder. Such expenses may include, but are not limited to the cost of advertisement, membership fees, and donations to community causes. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(a)(7)

h.) The funds may be distributed to any institution of public or private education in the state for the purpose of supplementing the funds of an existing scholarship trust or program. Please remember that state law requires that the organization to which you are making a contribution must have an up to date exemption from the Internal Revenue Service, in order for your contribution to be proper under this provision. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(a)(8)

**PROHIBITED USES.** The following expenditures from campaign funds are specifically prohibited:

a. Any residential or household items, supplies or expenditures, including mortgage, rent or utility payments for any part of any personal residence of a candidate or officeholder or a member of the candidate's or officeholder's family. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(b)(2)(A)

b. Mortgage, rent, or utility payments for any part of any nonresidential property that is owned by a candidate or officeholder or a member of a candidate's or officeholder's family and used for campaign purposes, to the extent the payments exceed the fair market value of the property usage. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(b)(2)(B)

c. Funeral, cremation, or burial expenses related to deaths within a candidate's or officeholder's family. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(b)(2)(C)

d. Clothing, other than items of de minimis value that are used in the campaign. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(b)(2)(D)

e. Tuition payments within a candidate's or officeholder's family other than those associated with training campaign staff or associated with an officeholder's duties. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(b)(2)(E)

f. Dues, fees, or gratuities at a county club, health club, or recreational facility, unless they are part of a specific fundraising event that takes place on the organization's premises. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(b)(2)(F)

g. Salary payments to a member of a candidate's family, unless the family member provides bona fide services to the campaign, any salary payment in excess of the fair market value of the services provided is a prohibited use. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(b)(2)(G)

h. Admission to a sporting event, concert, theater, activity, charitable event or other form of entertainment, unless the event is an expense associated with a legitimate campaign or officeholder activity where the tickets to such event are provided to students attending schools, guests or constituents of the candidate or officeholder, or persons involved in the candidate's or officeholder's campaign. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(b)(2)(H)

i. Payments for grooming or enhancing one's personal appearance unrelated to campaign activities. T.C.A. § 2-10-114(b)(2)(I)

j. Payment of any fines, fees, penalties assessed pursuant to Title 2 Chapter 10 (Campaign Finance Statute) or Chapter 3 Title 6 (Lobbying Statute). T.C.A. § 2-10-114(b)(2)(J)

**20. When must a report be filed if the due date falls on a weekend or holiday?**

Whenever a due date for a campaign financial disclosure statements falls on a weekend day or holiday, such report is due to be filed with the Registry of Election Finance or the county election commission, whichever is required, on the next business day. Rule 0530-1-1-.05(5)

“Filed” means the date that the Registry or county election commission actually receives the candidate or committee’s disclosure statement or the date of the postmark, if the statement is mailed by certified or registered mail. T.C.A. § 2-10-102(7)

**21. How does a candidate close out a campaign account?**

A campaign account may be closed out at any time when the candidate or political campaign committee has filed a campaign financial disclosure statement that shows no unexpended balance, continuing debts or obligations or expenditure deficit.

No additional reports are required after a campaign account is properly closed. T.C.A. § 2-10-107(b)

**22. What recordkeeping procedures are required by candidates?**

A candidate is required to retain copies of all checks, bank statements and vendor receipts for two years after the date of the election the records refer. Additionally, when feasible, a candidate should make copies of campaign contribution checks. T.C.A. § 2-10-212(c)

A candidate must adopt a recordkeeping system that will allow the candidate file accurate campaign financial disclosure statements disclosing all required information. Please see questions 5 and 6 for the information that is required to be disclosed. Rule 0530-1-1-.02

Campaign bank account reconciliations must be performed by a candidate to ensure that the bank account balances with the financial disclosure reports filed by the candidate. Rule 0530-1-1-.02(8)

The Registry will conduct random audits on state candidates. The Registry will audit 2% of legislative candidates, one supreme court candidate, one court of appeals candidate and one court of criminal appeals candidate, and any gubernatorial candidate receiving 10% of the vote in the general election. Candidates will be selected in a random draw. The random draw for legislative candidates will be by district. Audits will not take place until after the election year is completed. T.C.A. § 2-10-212

In addition, any state candidate that files a report which lists over 30% of their contributions as unitemized and the unitemized contributions exceed \$5,000 will be subject to an audit of their contributions. T.C.A. § 2-10-212

### **23. How long must campaign records be maintained?**

All financial records used by a candidate to prepare a campaign financial disclosure statement must be retained for at least two (2) years after the date of election to which the records refer. T.C.A. § 2-10-105(f)

If investigative procedures or an administrative hearing have been initiated against a candidate, financial records relating to a campaign account must be maintained by the candidate until the investigation or administrative hearing has been completed. Rule 0530-1-1-.02(7)

The Registry of Election Finance and each county election commission shall maintain all reports filed with their respective offices for five (5) years. These records will be available for public inspection and copying. T.C.A. § 2-10-206(a)(8)

### **24. How does an individual inspect or obtain a copy of a candidate's campaign financial disclosure statement?**

**2004 Elections Forward.** Campaign financial disclosure reports are available online. Go to <https://apps.tn.gov/tncamp> and click on the "Search Database" tab to find PAC and Candidate reports.

**Prior to 2004 Elections.** In order to inspect or obtain copies of campaign financial disclosure statements filed by state candidates and PACs, you may come to the Registry's office or request copies by email or telephone. Copies of local candidates may be obtained at the local county election commission. The Registry's charge for copying is 25¢ a page if our staff makes the copies and 10¢ if you make the copies in our office. You will need to check with the local county election commission in order to determine their fees.

### **25. What happens if a candidate does not file the required reports on time or violates other provisions of the law?**

The Registry of Election Finance has the authority to impose civil penalties against a candidate for failing to file a statement on time and ignoring subsequent warnings about the required report. The Registry also has the authority to impose civil penalties for other violations. T.C.A. § 2-10-207(6) and T.C.A. § 2-10-207(7)

**CLASS ONE (1) OFFENSES.** The Registry may impose class one (1) civil penalties of twenty-five dollars (\$25) a day up to a maximum of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) for the late filing of any campaign financial disclosure report required to be filed either with the Registry or the county election commission. The law sets specific procedures that must be followed whenever the Registry or a county election commission discovers that a required report has not been filed. T.C.A. § 2-10-110(a)(1)

The Registry staff or the county election commission, whichever office should have received a required campaign financial disclosure statement, must notify the candidate or committee by personal service or by return receipt requested mail that the report has not been received and that civil penalties of twenty-five dollars (\$25) a day will begin to accrue five (5) days after receipt of the notice until the report is filed or for thirty (30) days, whichever occurs first. T.C.A. § 2-10-110(a)(1)(A) and T.C.A. § 2-10-110(a)(1)(B)

A candidate that files the required report within that five-day grace period will not be subject to civil penalties.

**CLASS TWO (2) OFFENSES.** The Registry also has the authority to impose civil penalties of up to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or fifteen percent (15%) of the amount in controversy, whichever is greater for a class two (2) offense involving both state and local elections. A class two offense is the failure to file a report within thirty-five (35) days of service of notice of a delinquent report or any other violation of the Campaign Financial Disclosure Act. T.C.A. § 2-10-110(a)(2)

The law requires the Registry staff to send an assessment letter to the candidate before any class two (2) civil penalties are imposed by the Registry, advising the candidate or committee of the factual basis of the violation, the maximum penalty and the date that a response must be filed. T.C.A. § 2-10-110(a)(2)

**VIOLATIONS OF THE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS ACT OF 1995.** The Registry is empowered to impose a maximum civil penalty of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or one hundred fifteen percent (115%) of the amount of all contributions made or accepted in excess of the limitations of the Act, whichever is greater. T.C.A. § 2-10-308(a)

A campaign contribution made or accepted in excess of the limitations of this Act shall not be a violation if the candidate refunds or returns the contribution to the person making the contribution within sixty (60) days of its receipt. T.C.A. § 2-10-307(b)

**CONTESTED PENALTIES.** To appeal any penalty imposed by the Registry, a candidate or committee must file a petition with the Registry within thirty (30) days after the date that the order is issued. An assessment order issued by the Registry becomes final and cannot be appealed thirty (30) days after it has been issued. T.C.A. § 2-10-308(c), T.C.A. § 2-10-308(d), Rule 0530-1-1-.12(3) and Rule 0530-1-1-.12(4)

**26. If a candidate fails to file a disclosure statement, may that individual qualify as a candidate in future state or local elections?**

A candidate in a state or local election who fails to file a required disclosure statement is ineligible to qualify as a candidate in any future state or local elections until the report is properly filed with the Registry and/or the local county election commission. T.C.A. § 2-10-110(d)

**27. What happens if a candidate fails to pay an assessed civil penalty after an assessment order becomes final?**

If a candidate does not pay assessed civil penalties within thirty (30) days of an assessment order becoming final or by the qualifying deadline for election, whichever is earlier, the candidate shall be ineligible to qualify as a candidate in any upcoming elections until the assessed penalties and related costs are paid. T.C.A. § 2-10-110(c)(2)

**28. How does the Registry of Election Finance begin an investigation?**

**ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE.** The Registry of Election Finance may, on its own initiative, conduct an investigation whenever it believes that a violation of the Campaign Financial Disclosure Act may have occurred. If the Registry investigates the records of any selected candidate, it may also investigate the records of all other candidates running for the same office in the same district or other appropriate geographic area. The Registry has the authority to hold hearings, subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, and compel the production of books, correspondence, papers and other records. T.C.A. § 2-10-206(a)(7) and T.C.A. § 2-10-213(a)(2)

**UPON SWORN COMPLAINTS.** An investigation also may be based on a sworn complaint. A registered voter of Tennessee may file a sworn complaint alleging that a statement filed regarding an election for which that voter was registered to vote does not conform to the law, that a statement filed is not accurate or that a person has failed to file a statement required by law. Sworn complaints regarding candidates or single-candidate political campaign committees for state public office should be filed with the Registry. Sworn complaints regarding elections for local public office should be filed with the district attorney general in the judicial district in which the voter resides. T.C.A. § 2-10-108

**29. What guidelines will the Registry of Election Finance provide to candidates and political campaign committees regarding the Campaign Financial Disclosure Law?**

The Registry of Election Finance may issue written advisory opinions when questions arise about the Campaign Financial Disclosure Act and its requirements. Anyone wishing to receive guidance on his or her own campaign finance activities should contact the Registry prior to undertaking the questioned activity. The Registry will issue written advisory opinions to individuals based on written requests describing specific facts and circumstances. The Registry will issue opinions only as to prospective activities. A candidate may rely upon an advisory opinion without threat of sanction with respect to the particular issues addressed if the candidate conforms his or her conduct to the requirements of the advisory opinion. T.C.A. § 2-10-207(3)

**CAMPAIGN  
FINANCE  
STATUTES**

# **TENNESSEE CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE LAWS**

## **PART 1 – FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE**

- 2-10-101. Short title – Application – Administration.- Adoption of more stringent requirements.
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#### **PART 4 – GUBERNATORIAL INAUGURATION FINANCE DISCLOSURE**

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#### **PART 1 FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE**

##### **2-10-101. Short title - Application - Administration - Adoption of more stringent requirements.**

(a) This part shall be known and may be cited as the “Campaign Financial Disclosure Act of 1980.”

(b) The provisions of this part do not apply to any candidate for public office for which the service is part time and for which the compensation is less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per month; provided, that this exemption shall not be applicable to any such candidate for a public office as a chief administrative officer or to any such candidate whose expenditures exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

(c) Any charter provisions of municipalities regarding campaign financial disclosures of candidates for public office apply to candidates for public office, except to the extent that such provisions are in conflict with the provisions of this part.

(d) The registry of election finance shall have the jurisdiction to administer and enforce the provisions of this part concerning campaign financial disclosure.

(e) Nothing in this part shall be construed as prohibiting the largest municipality located within any county having a population of not less than three hundred thirty-five thousand (335,000) nor more than three hundred thirty-six thousand (336,000), according to the 1990 federal census or any subsequent federal census, from enacting, by ordinance or charter amendment, more stringent financial disclosures of candidates for municipal local public office than those requirements imposed by the provisions of this part. A municipality adopting more stringent requirements pursuant to this chapter shall compensate the county for any additional expenses incurred by the county election commission as a result of adopting more stringent requirements.

##### **2-10-102. Chapter definitions.**

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) “Affiliated political campaign committees” means political campaign committees established, financed, maintained, or controlled by any corporation, labor organization, or any other person, including any parent, subsidiary, branch, division, department, or local unit of such corporation, labor organization, or any other person, or by any group of such persons;

(A) All committees established, financed, maintained or controlled by a single corporation and/or its subsidiaries shall be affiliated political campaign committees;

(B) All committees established, financed, maintained or controlled by a single national or international union and/or its local unions or other subordinate organizations shall be affiliated political campaign committees;

(C) All committees established, financed, maintained or controlled by an organization of national or international unions and/or all its state and the local central bodies shall be affiliated political campaign committees, but such committees shall not be affiliated with the political campaign committees established, financed, maintained or controlled by any union that is a member of the organization;



- (D) All committees established, financed, maintained or controlled by a membership organization, other than political party committees, including trade or professional associations and/or related state and local entities of that organization or group shall be affiliated political campaign committees;
- (E) All committees established, financed, maintained or controlled by the same person or group of persons shall be affiliated political campaign committees;
- (F) Owners, officers, employees, members or other individuals associated with any corporation, labor organization, membership organization, or any other person or group of persons that has established, financed, maintained or controlled a political campaign committee shall not be considered affiliated with such political campaign committee;
- (2) “Attorney general and reporter” means the attorney general and reporter of Tennessee;
- (3) “Candidate” means an individual who has made a formal announcement of candidacy or who is qualified under the law of this state to seek nomination for election or elections to public office, or has received contributions or made expenditures except for incidental expenditures to determine if one shall be a candidate, or has given consent for a campaign committee to receive contributions or make expenditures with a view to bringing about the individual's nomination for election or election to state public office;
- (4) “Contribution” means any advance, conveyance, deposit, distribution, transfer of funds, loan, loan guaranty, personal funds of a candidate, payment, gift, or subscription of money or like thing of value, and any contract, agreement, promise or other obligation, whether or not legally enforceable, made for the purpose of influencing a measure or nomination for election or the election of any person for public office or for the purpose of defraying any expenses of an officeholder incurred in connection with the performance of the officeholder's duties, responsibilities, or constituent services. “Contribution” shall not be construed to include the following:
- (A) Services, including expenses provided without compensation by a candidate or individuals volunteering a portion or all of their time, on behalf of a candidate or campaign committee;
- (B) Any news story, commentary or editorial distributed through the facilities of any broadcasting station, newspaper, magazine or other periodical publication, unless such facilities are owned wholly or in part, or controlled by any political party, political committee or candidate;
- (C) Nonpartisan activity designed to encourage individuals to register to vote or to vote;
- (D) Any written, oral or electronically transmitted communication by any membership organization or corporation to its members or stockholders, if such membership organization or corporation is not organized primarily for the purpose of influencing the nomination for election, or election, of any person to public office;
- (E) The use of real or personal property and the cost of invitations, food and beverages not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100), voluntarily provided on an individual's residential premises for candidate related activities; or
- (F) For a county executive committee that has annual receipts and expenditures of less than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), receipts and expenditures, including a reasonable amount for rent, by a state or county executive committee or primary board when performing the duties imposed upon them by law; provided, that such receipts and expenditures are segregated from and maintained in a fund separate and apart from any funds used by the party as a political campaign committee, it being the legislative intent that if no separate fund is maintained, all receipts and expenditures of the committee or board shall be subject to the disclosure provisions of this part;
- (5) “Election” means any general, special or primary election or run-off election, held to approve or disapprove a measure or nominate or elect a candidate for public office;
- (6) (A) “Expenditure” means a purchase, payment, distribution, loan, advance, deposit or gift of money or anything of value made for the purpose of influencing a measure or the nomination for election or election of any person to public office;
- (B) “Expenditure” also includes the use of campaign funds by an officeholder for the furtherance of the office of the officeholder;
- (7) “File” or “filed” means the date actually deposited with or received by the appropriate office or the date of the postmark if postmarked and sent by registered or certified mail of the United States postal service;
- (8) “Measure” means any proposal submitted to the people of the entire state, or any political subdivision of the state, for their approval or rejection at an election, including any proposed law, act or part of an act of the general assembly, or revision of or amendment to the constitution;

(9) "Multicandidate political campaign committee" means a political campaign committee to support or oppose two (2) or more candidates for public office or two (2) or more measures;

(10) (A) "Person" means an individual, partnership, committee, association, corporation, labor organization or any other organization or group of persons;

(B) Any limited liability company or limited liability partnership created under title 48 shall be considered a person for the purpose of this subdivision (10) and subdivision (1);

(11) "Personal funds" means:

(A) Any assets which the candidate had legal right of access to or control over at the time the candidate became a candidate and with respect to which the candidate had either:

(i) Legal and rightful title; or

(ii) An equitable interest;

(B) Salary and other earned income from bona fide employment;

(C) Dividends and proceeds from the sale of the candidate's stocks or other investments;

(D) Bequests to the candidate; income from trusts established before candidacy;

(E) Income from trusts established by bequest after candidacy of which the candidate is the beneficiary;

(F) Gifts of a personal nature which had been customarily received prior to candidacy; and

(G) That portion of assets jointly owned with the candidate's spouse which is the candidate's share under the instruments of conveyance or ownership. If no specific share is indicated by such instrument, the value of one-half of the property used shall be considered as personal funds;

(12) "Political campaign committee" means:

(A) A combination of two (2) or more individuals, including any political party governing body, whether state or local, making expenditures, to support or oppose any candidate for public office or measure, but does not include a voter registration program;

(B) Any corporation or any other organization making expenditures, except as provided in subdivision (4), to support or oppose a measure; or

(C) Any committee, club, corporation, association or other group of persons which receives contributions or makes expenditures to support or oppose any candidate for public office or measure during a calendar quarter in an aggregate amount exceeding two hundred fifty dollars (\$250);

(13) "Public office" means any state public office or local public office filled by the voters;

(A) "Local public office" means any state, county, municipal, school or other district or precinct office or position, including judges and chancellors, that is filled by the voters, with the exception that "local public office" does not include any state public office as defined in subdivision (13)(B); and

(B) "State public office" means the offices of governor, member of the general assembly, delegate to a Tennessee constitutional convention, district attorney general, district public defender, judge of the court of criminal appeals, judge of the court of appeals and supreme court judge; and

(14) "Secretary of state" means the secretary of state or the secretary of state's designee;

### **2-10-103. Duties of county election commissions.**

(a) It is the duty of each county election commission to:

(1) Accept and file any information filed pursuant to the requirements of this part and information voluntarily supplied that exceeds the requirements of this part;

(2) Make statements and other information filed with it available for public inspection and copying during regular office hours at reasonable expense;

(3) Preserve such statements and other information for a period of five (5) years from date of receipt; and

(4) Notify all candidates for local public office in a local election of the requirements for filing any statement required by this part seven (7) days before any deadline provided for herein.

(b) It is the duty of the state election commission to furnish the name and address of any candidate for statewide public office and the language of any measure submitted to the people of the entire state to the secretary of state and the registry of election finance.

#### **2-10-104. Affirmation of statements before witness.**

All statements required by this part shall be signed by the person filing such statement in the presence of one (1) witness who shall sign such statements as a witness. The treasurer shall not be authorized to sign as a witness. Such person shall sign the statements prior to the filing of the statements. Statements required by this part do not have to be sworn to or affirmed by a notary.

#### **2-10-105. Filing of contribution, loan and expenditure statements - Deadlines - Certification of treasurers and other officers - Retention of records - Additional reporting requirements.**

(a) Each candidate for state public office and political campaign committee in a state election shall file with the registry of election finance a statement of all contributions received and all expenditures made by or on behalf of such candidate or such committee. The statement of each candidate for state public office shall include the date of the receipt of each contribution, and the statement of a political campaign committee in a state election shall include the date of each expenditure that is a contribution to a candidate in any election.

(b) Each candidate for local public office and political campaign committee for a local election shall file with each county election commission of the county where the election is held a statement of all contributions received and all expenditures made by or on behalf of such candidate or such committee. The statement of each candidate for local public office shall include the date of the receipt of each contribution, and the statement of a political campaign committee for a local election shall include the date of each expenditure that is a contribution to a candidate in any election.

(c) (1) The statements required by subsections (a) and (b) of each candidate, each single candidate political campaign committee, single measure political campaign or multicandidate political campaign committee shall be filed quarterly during an election year, within ten (10) days following the conclusion of the quarterly reports ending March 31, June 30, September 30 and January 15. Such candidate and political campaign committees shall also be required to file a pre-primary statement and pre-general election statement. The pre-primary statement shall cover the period from the last day included in the July quarterly statement through the tenth day before the primary election. Such pre-primary statement is due seven (7) days before the primary election. The pre-general election statement shall cover the period from the last day included in the October quarterly statement through the tenth day before the general election. Such pre-general election statement is due seven (7) days before the general election.

(2) Statements for any runoff election, from the last day included in any prior report through the tenth day before any such election shall be filed not later than seven (7) days before the election.

(3) Any candidate or political campaign committee filing a statement pursuant to subsection (e) before January 1 of the year in which the candidate or committee expects to be involved in an election shall file reports with the registry of election finance or the county election commission, whichever is required by subsections (a) and (b), by January 31 and July 15 immediately succeeding the filing, and semi-annually thereafter until the year of the election. If January 31 or July 15 falls on a Saturday, a Sunday, or a legal holiday, the provisions of § 1-3-102 shall apply. The ending date of the January 31 reporting period is January 15. The ending date of the July 15 reporting period is June 30. A semiannual report is not required to be made if the reporting date is within sixty (60) days of a report otherwise required by this part.

(4) Each statement required by subsections (a) and (b) shall include transactions occurring since the preceding statement.

(d) Each multicandidate political campaign committee shall file reports according to subsection (c)(1). Each report shall include transactions occurring since the preceding report. Such reports shall be made available on the Internet as soon as practicable once such multicandidate political campaign committee has filed such information and the registry has reviewed such statements for accuracy and timeliness. If a multicandidate political campaign committee has not timely filed a quarterly report, then the registry shall post on the Internet that the multicandidate political campaign committee is delinquent.

(e) (1) Each candidate and each political campaign committee shall certify the name and address of the candidate's or committee's political treasurer to the registry of election finance or the county election commission, where appropriate, before the candidate or

committee may receive a contribution or make an expenditure in a state or local election. A statement certifying a candidate's treasurer must contain the office the candidate is seeking and the year of the election. A state public officeholder shall also certify the name and address of such officeholder's political treasurer to the registry of election finance before the officeholder or the officeholder's political committee may accept a contribution to defray the expenses incurred in connection with the performance of the officeholder's duties or responsibilities, and a local officeholder shall so certify the name and address of such officeholder's treasurer to the appropriate county election commission. A candidate may serve as that candidate's own political treasurer. A candidate or political campaign committee shall notify the registry of election finance or county election commission of any changes in the office of its political treasurer. Any such statements filed pursuant to this part shall be cosigned by the candidate, if such candidate appoints a political treasurer other than the candidate.

(2) In addition to the requirements in subdivision (e)(1), a multicandidate political campaign committee shall also certify the name and address of all officers of such committee to the registry of election finance. A multicandidate political campaign committee is required to have at least one (1) officer, not including the treasurer of such committee.

(f) All records used by the candidate or political campaign committee to complete a statement required by this part shall be retained by the candidate or political campaign committee for at least two (2) years after the date of the election to which the records refer or the date of the statement, whichever is later. After the two-year period, the candidate or political campaign committee is authorized to destroy such records, absent any pending investigation by the registry of election finance or any other law enforcement agency, or absent any administrative or court proceeding. Once an investigation is closed by the registry of election finance, records may be destroyed upon a petition for approval to the registry of election finance.

(g) Separate reporting shall be required for both primary elections and general elections. Cumulative reporting for both primary and general elections for the same office in the same year is expressly prohibited. An appointment of a political treasurer pursuant to subsection (e) may be cumulative, and one (1) such appointment shall be sufficient for both a primary and general election for the same office in the same year. A successful primary candidate shall not be required to certify a political treasurer for the general election, if the candidate had previously certified such political treasurer prior to the primary election.

(h) (1) During the period beginning at twelve o'clock (12:00) midnight of the tenth day prior to a primary, general, runoff or special election or a referendum and extending through twelve o'clock (12:00) midnight of such election or referendum day, each candidate or political campaign committee shall, by telegram, facsimile machine, hand delivery or overnight mail delivery, file a report with the registry of election finance or the county election commission, whichever is required by subsections (a) and (b), of:

(A) The full name and address of each person from whom the candidate or committee has received and accepted a contribution, loan or transfer of funds during such period and the date of the receipt of each contribution in excess of the following amounts: a committee participating in the election of a candidate for any state public office, five thousand dollars (\$5,000); or, a committee participating in the election of a candidate for any local public office, two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500). If the committee is participating in the election of candidates for offices with different reporting amounts, the amount shall be the lowest for any candidate in whose election the committee is participating or in which any committee is participating to which it makes or from which it receives a transfer of funds; and

(B) Such report shall include the amount and date of each such contribution or loan reported, and a brief description and valuation of each in-kind contribution. If a loan is reported, the report shall contain the name and address of the lender, of the recipient of the proceeds of the loan, and of any person who makes any type of security agreement binding such person or such person's property, directly or indirectly, for the repayment of all or any part of the loan.

(2) Each report required by subdivision (h)(1) shall be filed by the end of the next business day following the day on which the contribution to be reported is received.

(3) The registry shall develop appropriate forms for the report required by subdivision (h)(1) and make such forms available to the candidates and the county election commissions.

(i) Any state or local political party or caucus of such political party established by members of either house of the general assembly that controls or operates one (1) or more political campaign committees shall report all receipts and disbursements by the party in the same manner and at the same time that it reports contributions and expenditures by the party's political campaign committee.

(j) Reports filed under this section shall not be cumulative, except as provided in subsection (g) regarding appointment of a political treasurer. Each report shall reflect the total for its own reporting period.

(k) "Date of the receipt", as used in this section, means the date when the contribution was received by the candidate, candidate's committee, or treasurer.

**2-10-106. Supplemental semiannual statements of contributions and expenditures - Funds maintained in segregated campaign accounts.**

(a) If the final statement of a candidate shows an unexpended balance of contributions, continuing debts and obligations, or an expenditure deficit, the campaign treasurer shall file with the registry of election finance or the county election commission, whichever is required by § 2-10-105(a) and (b), a supplemental semiannual statement of contributions and expenditures. Beginning after filing the first quarterly report due after an election, subsequent supplemental statements shall be filed on a semiannual basis by candidates until the account shows no unexpended balance, continuing debts and obligations, expenditures, or deficit. A candidate may close out a campaign account by transferring any remaining funds to any campaign fund, subject to the requirements of this part and commence semiannual filing as provided by this part.

(b) Funds maintained in a separate segregated campaign account are not deemed to be the personal property of any candidate or other individual. Such funds are not subject to garnishment or any type of execution to satisfy the debts or obligations of any individual which are not campaign debts.

**2-10-107. Content of statements - Closing out accounts - Reporting of in-kind contributions.**

(a) A statement filed under § 2-10-105 or § 2-10-106 shall consist of either:

(1) A statement that neither the contributions received nor the expenditures made during the period for which the statement is submitted exceeded one thousand dollars (\$1,000). Any statement filed pursuant to § 2-10-106 shall indicate whether an unexpended balance of contributions, continuing debts and obligations or an expenditure deficit exists; or

(2) (A) (i) A statement setting forth, under contributions, a list of all the contributions received, including the full name, complete address, occupation, and employer of each person who contributed a total amount of more than one hundred dollars (\$100) during the period for which the statement is submitted, and the amount contributed by that person;

(ii) When a candidate or the treasurer of a political campaign committee shows that best efforts have been used to obtain, maintain and submit the complete address, occupation, and employer required for contributors, the statement shall be considered in compliance with this subdivision (a)(2)(A). "Best efforts" includes notifying the contributor by first class mail that further information concerning such contributor is required under state law, or by including on a written solicitation for contributions a clear request for the contributor's name, address, occupation and employer and by accurately stating that such information is required under state law for all persons contributing more than one hundred dollars (\$100). Further definitions and guidelines, if any, for what is also considered "best efforts" shall be set by rule promulgated pursuant to § 4-55-103(1);

(iii) The statement of each candidate shall include the date of the receipt of each contribution and the statement of a political campaign committee shall include the date of each expenditure that is a contribution to a candidate. "Date of the receipt", as used in this subdivision (a)(2)(A)(iii), means the date when the contribution was received by the candidate, candidate's committee, or treasurer. The statement shall list as a single item the total amount of contributions of one hundred dollars (\$100) or less; and

(B) A statement setting forth, under expenditures, a list of all expenditures made, including the full name and address of each person to whom a total amount of more than one hundred dollars (\$100) was paid during the period for which the statement is submitted, the total amount paid to that person, and the purpose of the payment which shall clearly identify that it is an allowable expenditure under § 2-10-114. The words "reimbursement", "credit card purchase", "other" and "campaign expense" shall not be considered acceptable descriptions for "purpose". Any purchase made with a credit card shall also be disclosed as a payment to the vendor providing the item or service. Credit card payments to separate vendors shall be disclosed as separate expenditures. The statement shall list the total amount of expenditures of one hundred dollars (\$100) or less each, by category, without showing the exact amount of or vouching for each such expenditure.

(b) When any candidate or political campaign committee desires to close out a campaign account, it may file a statement to such effect at any time; provided, that the statement shall on its face show no unexpended balance, continuing debts or obligations or deficit.

(c) (1) When filing a statement under § 2-10-105 or § 2-10-106, a contribution, as defined in § 2-10-102, for which no monetary consideration is paid or promised, referred to as an in-kind contribution in this part, shall be listed separately in the disclosure statement and excluded from the lists of contributions and expenditures. The in-kind contribution list shall include:

(A) In-kind contributions of a value of one hundred dollars (\$100) or less may be listed as a single item; and

(B) (i) In-kind contributions of a value of more than one hundred dollars (\$100) during the period for which the statement is submitted, and for each such contribution, the category of the contribution, the name, address, occupation and employer of each person who contributed it.

(ii) When a candidate or the treasurer of a political campaign committee shows that best efforts have been used to obtain, maintain and submit the complete address, occupation, and employer required for contributors, the statement shall be considered in compliance with this subdivision (c)(1)(B). "Best efforts" includes notifying the contributor by first class mail that further information concerning such contributor is required under state law, or by including on a written solicitation for contributions a clear request for the contributor's name, address, occupation and employer and by accurately stating such information is required under state law for all persons contributing more than one hundred dollars (\$100). The registry of election finance shall, by rule, define and set guidelines for what is considered "best efforts."

(iii) The statement of each candidate shall include the date of the receipt of each in-kind contribution and the statement of a political campaign committee shall include the date of each expenditure that is an in-kind contribution to a candidate.

(2) Within ninety (90) days of February 15, 2006, by rule promulgated in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5, the registry of election finance shall enumerate a nonexclusive listing of examples of the various categories of contributions that constitute "in-kind contributions" requiring disclosure. Upon promulgating such rule, the registry shall provide a copy of such rule to each member of the general assembly and each qualified candidate for state office. Any changes or revisions to the rules shall be promulgated pursuant to § 4-55-103(1).

(d) An in-kind contribution is deemed to be made and shall be reportable in the period when such contribution is made or performed and not when the cost is billed or paid. The actual cost of the in-kind contribution, if known, shall be reported in the period such contribution is made or performed. If the actual cost of the in-kind contribution is not known, an estimate of the cost shall be reported in the period such contribution is made or performed, and the report shall indicate that the amount reported is estimated. If the actual cost, as indicated on the bill, is different from the amount reported, such amount shall be amended or adjusted on a later report covering the period in which payment is made.

(e) A statement filed under § 2-10-105 or § 2-10-106 shall also list any unexpended balance, any deficit and any continuing financial obligations of the candidate, campaign or committee.

(f) Payments to a person as reimbursement for expenditures made by the person on behalf of the candidate or committee shall be disclosed as payments to the vendor who provided the item or service to the candidate or committee, not the person who is reimbursed.

#### **2-10-108. Sworn complaint on statements of candidates - Penalty for false complaint.**

(a) A registered voter of Tennessee may file a sworn complaint alleging that a statement filed regarding an election for which that voter was qualified to vote does not conform to law or to the truth or that a person has failed to file a statement required by law.

(b) All sworn complaints on a statement of a candidate for state public office or a political campaign committee for such candidate must be filed in the office of the registry of election finance.

(c) All sworn complaints on a statement of a candidate for local public office or a political campaign committee for such candidate must be filed in the office of the district attorney general who represents the judicial district in which the voter resides.

(d) Any person who knowingly and willfully files a sworn complaint which is false or for the purpose of harassment is subject to the civil penalties enacted into law by Acts 1989, ch. 585, and is liable for reasonable attorneys' fees incurred by the candidate who was the subject of such complaint.

#### **2-10-109. Duties of attorney general and reporter.**

(a) It is the duty of the attorney general and reporter to:

(1) Advise county election commissions, primary boards and administrator of elections of their duties and responsibilities required by this part;

(2) Provide opinions upon the requirements of this part to the members of the general assembly, district attorneys general, the state and county election commissions, and such other officials who are charged with the administration of this law; and

(3) Represent the registry of election finance in any action or lawsuit in any court of this state.

(b) It is the duty of each district attorney general to:

(1) Investigate any sworn complaint filed in accordance with § 2-10-108(c); and

(2) Seek injunctions from the chancery courts of this state to enforce the provisions of this part against any campaign committee or candidate about whom a sworn complaint has been filed, if such action is justified.

## **2-10-110. Penalties.**

(a) The registry of election finance may impose a civil penalty for a violation of this part as provided in this section.

(1) "Class 1 offense" means the late filing of any report or statement required by this part. A Class 1 offense shall be punishable by a civil penalty of not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) per day up to a maximum of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750).

(A) For local public offices, the county administrator of elections shall have personally served upon, or send by return receipt requested mail, an assessment letter to any candidate or committee upon the administrator's discovery that a due report has not been filed. The administrator shall forward a copy of such notice to the registry of election finance. For state public offices, the registry of election finance shall have personally served upon, or send by return receipt requested mail, an assessment letter to any candidate or committee upon the registry or its appropriate staff discovering that a due report has not been filed. A civil penalty of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) per day shall begin to accrue five (5) days after personal service or receipt of the letter and shall continue to accrue until the report is filed or for thirty (30) days, whichever occurs first; provided, that no civil penalty shall be imposed by the registry of election finance if a candidate fails to list a contribution on a filed report but corrects the omission to the registry's satisfaction within ten (10) business days from the date on which the candidate is served process by, or receives notice from, the registry. This ten-day period shall not serve to stay the running of any time period or reduce any penalty established by this section. A candidate shall only be allowed to correct up to two (2) omissions in one (1) calendar year and the total of the omissions shall not exceed two thousand dollars (\$2,000). Any omission corrected by the candidate prior to the registry's discovery of the omission shall not count against the limitation on correction of omissions.

(B) For any Class 1 offense, the registry of election finance, through its appropriate staff, shall send an assessment letter to a candidate or committee in a form sufficient to advise the candidate or committee of the factual basis of the violation, the maximum penalty and the date a response to the letter must be filed. If a disclosure report is returned to a candidate or committee for correction, a copy of the original shall be retained on file until the corrected report is returned to the registry of election finance. If the original filing was in compliance with the intent of the law and minor errors are corrected within the date set for a response, no penalty shall be assessed.

(C) To request a waiver, reduction, or to in any way contest a Class 1 penalty imposed by the registry of election finance, a candidate for a state or local public office shall file a petition with the registry of election finance. Such petition may be considered as a contested case proceeding under the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5.

(2) "Class 2 offense" means failing to file a report required by this part within thirty-five (35) days after service of process or receipt of notice by registered or certified mail of an assessment or any other violation of the requirements of this part. A Class 2 offense is punishable by a maximum civil penalty of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or fifteen percent (15%) of the amount in controversy, if fifteen percent (15%) of the amount in controversy is greater than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

(A) For state and local public offices, the registry of election finance may impose a civil penalty for any Class 2 offense; provided, that no penalty shall be imposed by the registry of election finance if a candidate fails to list a contribution on a filed report but corrects the omission to the registry's satisfaction within ten (10) business days from the date on which the candidate is served process by, or receives notice from, the registry. This ten-day period shall not serve to stay the running of any time period established by this section. A candidate shall only be allowed to correct up to two (2) omissions in one (1) calendar year and the total of the omissions shall not exceed two thousand dollars (\$2,000). Any omission corrected by the candidate prior to the registry's discovery of the omission shall not count against the limitation on correction of omissions.

(B) To request a waiver, reduction, or to in any way contest a Class 2 penalty imposed by the registry of election finance, a candidate for a state or local public office shall file a petition with the registry of election finance. Such petition may be considered as a contested case proceeding under the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5.

(C) "Amount in controversy" means, as appropriate to the case, the greater of the total expenditures or total contributions, either of which or both of which are shown on a late report subsequently filed, or the amount of an expenditure or contribution that was not reported or was incorrectly reported.

(b) Penalties imposed under this part shall be deposited into the state general fund.

(c) (1) The registry of election finance shall maintain a register of all civil penalties imposed under this part and remaining unpaid.

(2) If a civil penalty lawfully assessed and any lawfully assessed cost attendant to the penalty are not paid within thirty (30) days after the assessment becomes final, or by the qualifying deadline for election, whichever is earlier, the candidate owing such civil penalty shall be ineligible to qualify for election to any state or local public office until such penalty and costs are paid.

(3) If a civil penalty authorized by this section is imposed, it shall be considered as a personal judgment against the candidate.

(d) A candidate for state or local public office who fails to file any statement or report required by this part shall be ineligible to qualify for election to any state or local public office until such statement or report is filed with either the registry or the appropriate county election commission, or both.

(e) It is the intent of the general assembly that the sanctions provided in this section shall be the civil penalties enacted into law by Acts 1989, ch. 585.

(f) (1) For any civil penalty levied by the registry against a multicandidate political campaign committee under this section or § 2-10-308, the treasurer of the committee is personally liable for the penalty.

(2) If a civil penalty lawfully assessed and any lawfully assessed cost attendant to the penalty are not paid within thirty (30) days after the assessment becomes final, the multicandidate political campaign committee owing the civil penalty shall be prohibited from receiving contributions; making expenditures to support or oppose candidates; or making expenditures to other multicandidate political campaign committees; and the treasurer and officers of such delinquent multicandidate political campaign committee shall be prohibited from creating another multicandidate political campaign committee or serving as a treasurer or an officer for another multicandidate political campaign committee until such penalty and all costs attendant to the penalty are paid in full.

**2-10-111. Notification of local election by county election commission - Report of compliance with statement filings - Reporting of late filings.**

(a) Each county election commission shall notify the state election commission and the registry of election finance of each local election held in that county at the same time that public notice is posted for the election.

(b) Each time that a statement for a candidate for local public office or political campaign committee for a local election is due to be filed with the county election commission under § 2-10-105, the county election commission shall file with the registry of election finance a report certifying that all candidates have filed the report timely or a list of all candidates who have failed to report timely. For each local candidate who is reported to the registry of election finance as filing late, the county election commission shall be required to file, on a form prescribed by the registry, information pertaining to the late filing. The registry shall determine by rule what information from the county election commission shall be necessary. Any changes or revisions to the rules shall be promulgated pursuant to § 4-55-103(1).

**2-10-112. Application of outstanding balance of campaign account cannot exceed campaign contribution limits.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, any candidate who has a previous campaign account with an outstanding balance and who chooses to apply contributions to that previous campaign account, shall not exceed the campaign contribution limits in title 2, chapter 10, part 3, for the election cycle during which the candidate accepts the contribution, regardless of whether such candidate applies the amount to the previous campaign account or to the current campaign account. Under no circumstances shall the candidate exceed the contribution limits for the election cycle to which the previous campaign account with an outstanding balance applies.

**2-10-113. [Repealed.]**

**2-10-114. Campaign funds - Allocation of unexpended contributions - Use of funds - Specifically prohibited uses of funds - Allocation of funds on death of incumbent or candidate.**

(a) Any candidate for public office in this state shall allocate an unexpended balance of contributions after the election to one (1) or a combination of the following:

- (1) The funds may be retained or transferred to any campaign fund pursuant to Tennessee reporting requirements;
- (2) The funds may be returned to any or all of the candidate's contributors, in accordance with a formula or plan specified in the candidate's disclosure of the allocation;
- (3) The funds may be distributed to the executive committee of the candidate's political party;
- (4) The funds may be deposited in the volunteer public education trust fund established under title 49, chapter 3, part 4;
- (5) The funds may be distributed to any organization described in 26 U.S.C. § 170(c);



(6) The funds may be distributed to an organization that has received a determination of exemption from the United States internal revenue service pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3) or (4), if such organization is currently operating under such exemption;

(7) The funds may be used to defray any ordinary and necessary expenses incurred in connection with the office of the officeholder. Such expenses may include, but are not limited to, the cost of advertisements, membership fees, and donations to community causes; and

(8) The funds may be distributed to any institution of public or private education in the state, for the purpose of supplementing the funds of an existing scholarship trust or program.

(b) (1) Except as provided in subsection (a), no candidate for public office shall use any campaign funds for any other purpose other than a contribution or expenditure as defined by this part. The disbursement of campaign funds for a candidate's own personal use is not permitted. For the purpose of this section, "personal use" means any use by which the candidate for public office or elected public official would be required to treat the amount of the expenditure as gross income under 26 U.S.C. § 61, or any subsequent corresponding Internal Revenue Code section.

(2) Expenditures that are specifically prohibited under this section include, but are not limited to:

(A) Any residential or household items, supplies or expenditures, including mortgage, rent or utility payments for any part of any personal residence of a candidate or officeholder or a member of the candidate's or officeholder's family;

(B) Mortgage, rent, or utility payments for any part of any nonresidential property that is owned by a candidate or officeholder or a member of a candidate's or officeholder's family and used for campaign purposes, to the extent the payments exceed the fair market value of the property usage;

(C) Funeral, cremation, or burial expenses related to deaths within a candidate's or officeholder's family;

(D) Clothing, other than items of de minimis value that are used in the campaign;

(E) Tuition payments within a candidate's or officeholder's family other than those associated with training campaign staff or associated with an officeholder's duties;

(F) Dues, fees, or gratuities at a country club, health club, or recreational facility, unless they are part of a specific fundraising event that takes place on the organization's premises;

(G) Salary payments to a member of a candidate's family, unless the family member is providing bona fide services to the campaign. If a family member provides bona fide services to the campaign, any salary payment in excess of the fair market value of the services provided is a prohibited use;

(H) Admission to a sporting event, concert, theater, activity, charitable event or other form of entertainment, unless the event is an expense associated with a legitimate campaign or officeholder activity, where the tickets to such event are provided to students attending schools, guests or constituents of the candidate or officeholder, or persons involved in the candidate's or officeholder's campaign;

(I) Payments for grooming or enhancing one's personal appearance unrelated to campaign activities; or

(J) Payment of any fines, fees, or penalties assessed pursuant to this chapter or title 3, chapter 6.

(3) A violation of this subsection (b) is a Class 2 offense as defined in § 2-10-110(a)(2).

(c) In addition to the manner in which unexpended balances in the campaign account of a candidate may be allocated under the provisions of subsection (a), if an incumbent dies while in office and has an unexpended balance in a campaign account, and if such incumbent's surviving spouse or child is appointed to fill the unexpired term of the deceased incumbent or is elected to the office previously held by the deceased, then the balance remaining in the campaign account of such deceased incumbent shall be transferred to the campaign account of the surviving spouse or child of the deceased incumbent for use by such surviving spouse or child as a candidate for election to public office in accordance with the provisions of this part.

(d) (1) In the event a candidate for public office dies with an unexpended balance of contributions in such candidate's campaign account and the provisions of subsection (c) are not applicable, then the following individuals, in the descending order, are authorized to allocate such unexpended balance to those persons, political parties, or charitable organizations listed in subdivisions (a)(2)-(6) and (a)(8):

(A) The deceased candidate, if the candidate provided for allocation of an unexpended balance through the candidate's will;

(B) The deceased candidate's treasurer, unless the candidate was the treasurer;

(C) The surviving spouse of the deceased candidate, if the candidate was the treasurer; and

(D) The next of kin of the deceased candidate, if the provisions of subdivisions (d) (1)(B) and (C) do not apply.

(2) If a decision is not made by any such individual, or individuals where subdivision (d)(1)(D) applies, within one (1) year of the date of death of the deceased candidate, then the unexpended balance shall be distributed by the registry of election finance to the volunteer public education trust fund established under title 49, chapter 3, part 4.

(e) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a), if a member of the general assembly raises funds for a local public office during the time the general assembly is in session in accordance with § 2-10-310(a), then any unexpended balance of contributions in the campaign account established by that member of the general assembly for the member's candidacy for local public office shall not be used for or distributed to a campaign fund:

(1) For the benefit of any election for any candidate for the general assembly;

(2) For the benefit of any statewide election, or any state, national or other political party;

(3) For the benefit of any state, national or other political party caucus; or

(4) For the benefit of any state, national or other political party caucus member.

**2-10-116. Honorarium defined - Acceptance of honorarium by public official.**

(a) The acceptance of an honorarium by a public official in such person's capacity as a public official is prohibited. "Honorarium" means a payment of money or any thing of value for an appearance, speech or article, but does not include actual and necessary travel expenses, meals and lodging associated with such appearance, speech or article.

(b) Acceptance of an honorarium for an appearance, speech or article by a public official in such person's capacity as a private business person, professional or tradesperson is not prohibited.

(c) As used in this section, "public official" means:

(1) Each person holding any state public office filled by the voters;

(2) Each person holding any local public office filled by the voters;

(3) Each member of the governor's cabinet; and

(4) Each cabinet level staff person employed within the governor's office.

**2-10-117. Contributions from political action committees within ten days of election.**

No multicandidate political campaign committee other than a committee controlled by a political party on the national, state, or local level or by a caucus of such political party established by members of either house of the general assembly shall make a contribution to any candidate after the tenth day before an election until the day of the election.

**2-10-118. Filing by responsible party with prior assessment record.**

(a) It is unlawful for a responsible party of a multicandidate political campaign committee who has a prior assessment record to intentionally fail to file a required report under this chapter, for which the party is responsible for filing, within thirty-five (35) days after service of process or receipt of notice from the registry by registered or certified mail. For the purposes of this section, "responsible party" is the treasurer of the committee appointed pursuant to § 2-10-105(e), or if no treasurer has been appointed, any person who organizes or directs the fundraising activities of a multicandidate political campaign committee. A responsible party shall be considered to have a prior assessment record for purposes of this section if during the person's service as a responsible party to one (1) or more multicandidate political campaign committees, the committee or committees violate on two (2) or more occasions § 2-10-110 or § 2-10-308 and such violations result in the committee or committees being assessed a penalty by the registry.

(b) A violation of this section is a Class E felony.

**2-10-119. Transfer of funds or assets from federal to state election campaign committee prohibited.**

Transfers of funds or assets from a candidate's campaign committee or account for a federal election to a political campaign committee of or for such candidate for public office in this state is prohibited.

**2-10-120. Authority of county election commission.**

The county election commission has the authority to forward information regarding violation of disclosure laws by candidates for local public office to the district attorney general for investigation without the necessity of a sworn complaint from a registered voter as provided by § 2-10-108.

**2-10-121. Registration fee for political campaign committees.**

No later than January 31 of each year, each multicandidate political campaign committee registered with the registry of election finance shall pay a registration fee to be determined by rule promulgated pursuant to § 4-55-103(1). For any multicandidate political campaign committee registering a new committee during any year, the committee shall pay the appropriate registration fee at the time that it certifies its political treasurer. All fees collected under this section shall be retained and used for expenses related to maintaining an electronic filing system. This section shall not apply to any statewide political party as defined in § 2-1-104 or subsidiaries of the political party.

**2-10-131. [Repealed.]**

**2-10-132. Independent expenditures.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, a corporation that uses corporate funds, moneys or credits for communications expressly advocating the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate which funds, moneys or credits are not used with the cooperation or with the prior consent of, or in consultation with, or at the request of, or suggestion of, a candidate or any agent or authorized committee of the candidate shall be considered a political campaign committee for purposes of reporting such expenditures. The corporation shall be required to file reports required by § 2-10-105(c)(1) and an appointment of treasurer form.

**PART 2  
REGISTRY OF ELECTION FINANCE**

**2-10-201. Short title.**

This part shall be known and may be cited as the "Registry of Election Finance Act of 1989."

**2-10-202. Legislative intent.**

It is the intent of the general assembly to provide adequate financial disclosure by public officials, candidates for public office, and lobbyists. Furthermore, it is the intent of the general assembly to establish a registry of election finance to ensure enforcement of these statutes.

**2-10-203. Registry of election finance - Creation - Appointments - Qualifications - Administration.**

(a) There is hereby created as an independent entity of state government a Tennessee registry of election finance. The registry shall be composed of six (6) members appointed as provided herein. Appointments shall be made to reflect the broadest possible representation of Tennessee citizens. Of the six (6) members appointed, at least one (1) shall be a female and one (1) shall be black. However, a black female shall not satisfy the requirement of one (1) female and one (1) black. Each member shall have been a legal resident of this state for five (5) years immediately preceding selection. Members shall be at least thirty (30) years of age, registered voters in Tennessee, not announced candidates for public office, not members of a political party's state executive committee, shall not have been convicted of an election offense, and shall be persons of high ethical standards who have an active interest in promoting fair elections. Gubernatorial appointees shall be subject to confirmation by joint resolution of the general assembly. Such appointees shall have full power to serve until any vote of nonconfirmation.

(b) (1) For administrative purposes, the registry shall be attached to the department of state for all administrative matters relating to receipts, disbursements, expense accounts, budget, audit, and other related items. The autonomy of the registry and its authority are not affected by subsection (b) and the secretary of state shall have no administrative or supervisory control over the registry.

(2) No person performing staff duties for the registry of election finance, including the executive director, or any member of such person's immediate family as defined in § 3-6-301, shall, during the period of such employment:

- (A) Be allowed to hold or qualify for elective office to any state or local public office as defined in § 2-10-102;
  - (B) Be an officer of any political party or political committee;
  - (C) Permit such person's name to be used or make contributions in support of or in opposition to any candidate or proposition;
  - (D) Participate in any way in any election campaign;
  - (E) Lobby or employ a lobbyist; provided, that this provision on lobbying shall not prohibit the executive director from the performance of the executive director's duties; or
  - (F) Be employed by any elected officeholder, either in an official capacity or as an individual, or be employed by any business in which an elected officeholder has any direct input concerning employment decisions.
- (c) Members of the registry shall be selected for staggered five-year terms as follows:
- (1) The governor shall appoint two (2) members. One (1) member shall be appointed from a list of three (3) nominees submitted by the state executive committee of the majority party. One (1) member shall be appointed from a list of three (3) nominees submitted by the state executive committee of the minority party. The governor's solicitations and the replies shall be public records. The governor shall give due consideration to such nominations. The governor may request a second list of nominees; provided, however, no nominees from the original list of nominees may appear on the second list of nominees.
  - (2) The senate shall appoint two (2) members, with one (1) member to be chosen by the members of the senate democratic caucus and one (1) member to be chosen by the members of the senate republican caucus; and
  - (3) The house of representatives shall appoint two (2) members, with one (1) member to be chosen by the members of the house of representatives democratic caucus and one (1) member to be chosen by the members of the house of representatives republican caucus.
- (d) Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the vacating member's office was originally filled.
- (e) The registry shall elect a chair from among its appointed membership. The chair shall serve in that capacity for one (1) year and shall be eligible for reelection. The chair shall preside at all meetings and shall have all the powers and privileges of the other members.
- (f) The registry shall fix the place and time of its regular meetings by order duly recorded in its minutes. No action shall be taken without a quorum present. Special meetings shall be called by the chair on the chair's initiative or on the written request of four (4) members. Members shall receive seven (7) days' written notice of a special meeting, and the notice shall specify the purpose, time and place of the meeting, and no other matters may be considered, without a specific waiver by all the members.
- (g) The members of the registry shall receive no compensation; provided, that each member of the registry shall be eligible for reimbursement for expenses and mileage in accordance with the regulations promulgated by the commissioner of finance and administration and approved by the attorney general and reporter.
- (h) No member of the registry or such member's immediate family, as defined in § 3-6-301, shall, during registry membership:
- (1) Be allowed to hold or qualify for elective office to any state or local public office, as defined in § 2-10-102;
  - (2) Be an employee of the state or any political subdivision of the state;
  - (3) Be an officer of any political party or political committee;
  - (4) Permit such person's name to be used or make campaign contributions in support of or in opposition to any candidate or proposition, except that a member's immediate family may make campaign contributions in support of or in opposition to any candidate or proposition;
  - (5) Participate in any way in any election campaign;
  - (6) Lobby or employ a lobbyist; or
  - (7) Be employed by any elected officeholder, either in an official capacity or as an individual, or be employed by any business in which an elected officeholder has any direct input concerning employment decisions.

(i) An incumbent member of the registry may seek votes for confirmation of the member's appointment to the registry; provided, that the member shall comply with the provisions of subsection (h).

(j) The provisions of subsection (h) shall be applicable for one (1) year subsequent to the removal, vacancy or termination of the term of office of a member of the registry.

(k) (1) Every member of the registry of election finance shall, before they proceed to business, take an oath or affirmation to support the constitution of this state and of the United States and the laws of this state and also the following oath: I \_\_\_\_\_ do solemnly swear (or affirm) that as a member of this registry of election finance, I will, in all matters, vote without favor, affection, partiality, or prejudice; and that I will not propose or assent to any action, measure, or resolution which shall appear to me to be contrary to law.

(2) Unless otherwise provided by law, any member of the registry who violates the oath of office for that position or participates in any of the activities prohibited by this chapter commits a Class A misdemeanor. If a sworn allegation is made that a member has violated the oath of office for the member's position or has participated in any of the activities prohibited by this chapter, then upon a unanimous vote of the remaining members, the member against whom the sworn allegation is made may be suspended from the registry for such purposes and for such times as the remaining members shall unanimously determine, but no suspension shall extend beyond final disposition of the sworn allegation. The accused member shall not participate in the suspension vote. If a member of the registry is found guilty of or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to a violation of the oath of office for the member's position or participates in any of the activities prohibited by this chapter, then that member shall be deemed to be removed from office.

**2-10-204. [Repealed.]**

**2-10-205. Jurisdiction to administer and enforce certain statutes.**

The registry has the jurisdiction to administer and enforce the provisions of the following:

- (1) The Campaign Financial Disclosure Act, compiled in part 1 of this chapter; and
- (2) The Campaign Contribution Limits Act, compiled in part 3 of this chapter.

**2-10-206. Registry of election finance - Duties.**

(a) The duties of the registry include the following:

- (1) Develop prescribed forms for statements that are required to be filed under the laws pursuant to § 2-10-205, with the objective of making the disclosure statements as simple and understandable as possible for both the person filing the disclosure statement and the average citizen of the state of Tennessee;
- (2) Develop a filing, coding and cross-indexing system;
- (3) Make each report filed available for public inspection and copying during regular office hours at the expense of any person requesting copies of the same;
- (4) Review all filed statements to ensure compliance with the respective disclosure laws. Statements filed with the registry for more than two (2) years shall be deemed to be sufficient, absent a showing of fraud or the existence of an ongoing investigation related to the statement;
- (5) Prepare and publish a manual for all candidates and committees, describing the requirements of the law, including uniform methods of bookkeeping and reporting and requirements as to reporting dates and the length of time that candidates and committees are required to keep any records pursuant to the provisions of this part;
- (6) Provide an annual report to the governor and the general assembly concerning the administration and enforcement of the disclosure law by January 15 of each year that includes recommendations by the registry or a statement that the registry makes no recommendations;
- (7) Investigate any alleged violation upon sworn complaint or upon its own motion. If the registry investigates the records of any selected candidate, it may also investigate the records of all other candidates running for the same office in the same district or other appropriate geographic area;
- (8) Preserve all reports or statements for five (5) years from the date of filing, absent any pending investigation by the registry of election finance or any other law enforcement agency, or absent any administrative or court proceeding;

(9) Notify all candidates for state public office in a state election of the requirements for filing any required disclosure statement fourteen (14) days before any fixed deadline provided for such filing; and

(10) Conduct audits.

(b) The registry shall notify each member of the general assembly by sending notice to the member's home address and the member's legislative office address in Nashville.

#### **2-10-207. Registry of election finance - Powers.**

The registry of election finance has the following powers:

(1) [Deleted by 2009 amendment.]

(2) Hold hearings, conduct audits, subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, and compel production of books, correspondence, papers and other records;

(3) Issue written advisory opinions concerning compliance with this chapter, which may be relied upon without threat of sanction with respect to the issue addressed by the opinion, if the candidate or committee conforms the candidate's or committee's conduct to the requirements of the advisory opinion. Such advisory opinions shall be posted on the web site of the registry of election finance;

(4) In determining whether an actual violation has occurred, conduct a contested case hearing;

(5) Issue an appropriate order following a determination;

(6) Assess a late filing fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) per day up to a maximum total penalty of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750);

(7) Assess a civil penalty for any violation of the disclosure laws as provided by this part. Civil penalties may be assessed for any violation of the Campaign Financial Disclosure Act, compiled in part 1 of this chapter, and the Campaign Contribution Limits Act, compiled in part 3 of this chapter; provided, that the registry shall only have the power to assess a civil penalty after notice and opportunity for hearing; and

(8) Where the results of its investigation indicate a criminal act may have occurred, the registry shall refer the matter to the appropriate district attorney general for criminal prosecution.

#### **2-10-208. Applicability of part.**

(a) All political accounts or funds subject to Tennessee law on January 1, 1990, shall become subject to the provisions of this part.

(b) For the purposes of enforcement, this part shall be prospective only, and the registry shall limit its investigations to acts or omissions which occur after January 1, 1990.

#### **2-10-209. Enforcement - Chancery court petitions and orders.**

The registry has the authority to petition the chancery court through the attorney general and reporter for enforcement of any order it has issued. The court's order of enforcement has the same force and effect as a civil judgment.

#### **2-10-210. Authority to establish or levy penalty or sanction.**

The registry of election finance shall not establish or levy any penalty or sanction for any action alleged to be a violation of the rules and regulations of the registry unless such action is also a violation of a statutory requirement.

#### **2-10-211. Electronic filing system.**

(a) The registry of election finance, notwithstanding any other provision of the law to the contrary, shall do all of the following:

(1) Develop, with the advice, assistance and approval of the office of information resources, an Internet-based electronic filing process for use by all candidates for state public office and all political campaign committees that are required to file statements and reports with the registry of election finance;

(2) Develop, with the advice, assistance and approval of the office of information resources, a system that provides each candidate and campaign committee with secure access to the electronic filing system. The system shall provide safeguards against efforts to tamper or change the data in any way;

(3) Provide training to candidates and campaign committees on the use of the electronic filing system;

(4) Develop, with the advice, assistance and approval of the office of information resources, a system that will forward a copy of any candidate's report that is filed electronically with the registry of election finance to the appropriate local county election commission; and

(5) Provide public access to a list of campaign contributions made to candidates and a list of expenditures made by those candidates by posting the lists on the Internet. In addition, the registry shall provide assistance to anyone seeking to access this information on the Internet. Beginning with the 2006 regular August election, campaign contribution lists shall be made available on the Internet after a candidate has filed the information and the registry has reviewed the statements for accuracy and timeliness. If a candidate has not timely filed campaign contribution lists, then the registry shall post on the Internet that the candidate's statement is delinquent.

(b) The registry of election finance, once the development of the electronic filing system is completed and tested, shall provide public notice that the system is operational and available for filers to commence use.

(c) The registry of election finance shall, with the advice, assistance and approval of the office of information resources, implement the electronic filing system for use in the 2006 regular August election and all subsequent state elections. Candidates for state public offices and campaign committees may commence electronic filing for any state election beginning in the year 2006 and after notice has been given pursuant to subsection (b), and may continue to file electronically all reports for any subsequent state elections. Beginning in July 2006, candidates for state public offices and campaign committees, who have contributions or expenditures in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per reporting period, shall file electronically all reports for any subsequent state elections. Failure to timely file reports electronically may be penalized as provided in § 2-10-110.

(d) All information entered by any candidate or campaign committee into the electronic filing system shall remain confidential until the information is filed with the registry of election finance.

## **2-10-212. Audits and investigations of reports and statements.**

(a) The registry of election finance shall conduct audits and field investigations of reports and statements filed with the registry as follows:

(1) Each gubernatorial candidate and that candidate's committees that receive at least ten percent (10%) of the vote at the general election shall be audited;

(2) Each candidate for the general assembly and such candidate's committees shall be subject to an audit by the registry on a random selection of districts in an election. Districts shall be randomly drawn until a total of approximately two percent (2%) of all candidates for the general assembly have been selected; and

(3) Each candidate for supreme court, court of appeals and criminal court of appeals shall be subject to an audit by the registry on a random selection. One (1) candidate from each of the supreme court, court of appeals and criminal court of appeals shall be randomly selected by the registry to be audited each election cycle.

(b) (1) (A) The registry shall select by lot the districts to be audited on a random basis regarding candidates for the general assembly. For judicial offices, the registry shall select by lot the names of candidates to be audited on a random basis.

(B) The selection shall be after the last date for filing the first report or statement following the general election for which the candidate ran or for which the committee donated money. The attorney general and reporter, or the attorney general's designee, shall attend the random selection to preserve the integrity of the proceeding.

(2) No audit or investigation of any candidate or candidate's committee in connection with a report or statement required by this chapter shall begin until after the last date for filing the first report or statement following the general election for the office for which the candidate ran. When the campaign statements or reports of a candidate are audited and investigated, the audit and investigation shall cover all campaign statements and reports filed for the primary and general elections and any previous campaign statement or report filed since the last election for that office, but shall exclude any statements or reports that have previously been audited.

(3) Audits of members of the general assembly shall only take place during June through December during odd-numbered years.

(c) In order to comply with an audit, candidates and campaigns shall retain copies of all checks, bank statements and vendor receipts for two (2) years after the date of the election to which the records refer.

(d) (1) The registry shall adopt auditing guidelines and standards with guidance from the comptroller of the treasury, which shall govern audits and field investigations conducted under this section. The guidelines and standards shall be formulated to accomplish the following purposes:

- (A) The audits should encourage compliance and detect violations of this chapter;
- (B) The audits should be conducted with maximum efficiency in a cost-effective manner; and
- (C) The audits should be as unobtrusive as possible, consistent with the purposes provided in this subdivision (d)(1).

(2) In adopting its guidelines and standards, the registry shall consider relevant guidelines and standards of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants to the extent such guidelines and standards are applicable and consistent with the purposes set forth in this section.

(e) The detailed information received pursuant to this section for an audit shall be considered working papers of the registry of election finance and is, therefore, confidential and not an open record pursuant to title 10, chapter 7.

(f) After the completion and approval of an audit by the registry, the registry shall post any finding that could result in an assessment of significant penalties on the registry's web site, except that audits of candidates defeated in the primary election shall not be made public until after the general election.

(g) Failure to comply with an audit investigation under this section is a Class 2 offense as defined in § 2-10-110.

(h) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, any candidate running for the office of governor more than one (1) year prior to the general election may elect to do self-audits. Such audits shall be given to the registry and the registry may give the candidate a letter of compliance stating the audit is complete and acceptable.

(i) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, if any candidate files a contribution statement with more than thirty percent (30%) of the candidate's contributions reported as unitemized contributions and such contributions total more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), then the candidate's contributions shall automatically be audited by the registry.

### **2-10-213. Power and authority of registry in conducting audits and hearings - Subpoenas - Contempt.**

(a) (1) For the purpose of conducting any hearing or audit as provided in this chapter, the registry has the power to administer oaths, to call any party to testify under oath at the hearings, to require the attendance of witnesses, the production of books, records, and papers, and to take the depositions of witnesses.

(2) For purposes of subdivision (a)(1), the registry is authorized to issue a subpoena for any witness or a subpoena duces tecum to compel the production of any books, records or papers. These subpoenas may be served by registered mail, return receipt requested, to the addressee's business mailing address, or by personnel of the registry, or shall be directed for service to the sheriff of the county where the witness resides or is found, or where the person in custody of any books, records, or papers resides or is found.

(b) In case of a refusal to obey a subpoena issued to any person under subsection (a), any circuit or chancery court of this state within the jurisdiction in which the person refusing to obey the subpoena is found or resides may issue to the person, upon application by the registry, an order requiring the person to appear before the court to show cause why the person should not be held in contempt for refusal to obey the subpoena. Failure to obey a subpoena may be punished by the court as a contempt of court.

### **2-10-214. Required training program for members of registry.**

(a) A person who is appointed to the registry of election finance may not vote, deliberate, or be counted as a member in attendance at a meeting of the registry until the person completes a training program provided by the office of the attorney general and reporter that complies with this section. This section shall not apply to members who are reappointed to the registry.

(b) The training program shall provide the person with information regarding:

- (1) The legislation that created the registry;
- (2) The role and function of the registry;
- (3) The rules of the registry, with an emphasis on the rules that relate to disciplinary and investigatory authority;



- (4) The current budget for the registry;
  - (5) The results of the most recent formal audit of the registry;
  - (6) The requirements of the campaign finance laws administrated and enforced by the registry; and
  - (7) Any applicable policies adopted by the registry.
- (c) A person appointed to the registry is entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred in attending the training program.
- (d) This section shall apply prospectively to members appointed to the registry after February 15, 2006.

**PART 3  
CAMPAIGN CONTRUBTIONS LIMITS**

**2-10-301. Short title - Jurisdiction.**

- (a) This part shall be known and may be cited as the “Campaign Contribution Limits Act of 1995.”
- (b) The registry of election finance has jurisdiction to administer and enforce the provisions of this part.

**2-10-302. Contribution limits.**

- (a) No person shall make contributions to any candidate with respect to any election which, in the aggregate, exceed:
  - (1) For an office elected by statewide election, two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500); or
  - (2) For any other state or local public office, one thousand dollars (\$1,000).
- (b) No multicandidate political campaign committee shall make contributions to any candidate with respect to any election which, in the aggregate, exceed:
  - (1) For an office elected by statewide election or the senate, seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500); and
  - (2) For any other state or local public office, five thousand dollars (\$5,000).
- (c) With respect to contributions from multicandidate political campaign committees for each election:
  - (1) No candidate for an office elected by statewide election shall accept in the aggregate more than fifty percent (50%) of the candidate's total contributions from multicandidate political campaign committees; and
  - (2) No candidate for any other state or local public office shall accept in the aggregate more than seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) from multicandidate political campaign committees.

In determining the aggregate limits established by this subsection (c), contributions made to a candidate by a committee controlled by a political party on the national, state, or local level or by a caucus of such political party established by members of either house of the general assembly are not included.

- (d) (1) Each contribution limit established in subsection (a), (b) or (c) shall be adjusted to reflect the percentage of change in the average consumer price index (all items-city average) as published by the United States department of labor, bureau of labor statistics, for the period of January 1, 1996, through December 31, 2010. Each such adjustment shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of one hundred dollars (\$100). The registry of election finance shall publish each such adjusted amount on its web site.
- (2) On January 1, 2013, and every two (2) years thereafter, each contribution limit established in subsection (a), (b) or (c), as adjusted pursuant to subdivision (d) (1), shall be further adjusted to reflect the percentage of change in the average consumer price index (all items-city average), as published by the United States department of labor, bureau of labor statistics, for the two-year period immediately preceding. Each such adjustment under this subdivision (d) (2) shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of one hundred dollars (\$100). The registry of election finance shall publish each such adjusted amount on its web site.

**2-10-303. Indirect contributions - Political action committees.**

For purposes of the limitations contained in this part:

- (1) Contributions made to any political campaign committee authorized by a candidate to accept contributions on the candidate's behalf shall be considered to be contributions made to such candidate;
- (2) Contributions made by a political campaign committee authorized by a candidate to make expenditures on the candidate's behalf shall be considered contributions made by such candidate;
- (3) All contributions made by a person, either directly or indirectly, on behalf of a particular candidate, including contributions which are in any way earmarked or otherwise directed through an intermediary or conduit to such candidate, shall be treated as contributions from such person to such candidate. The intermediary or conduit shall report the original source and the intended recipient of such contribution to the registry of election finance and to the intended recipient;
- (4) All contributions made by affiliated political campaign committees shall be considered to have been made by a single committee; and
- (5) Expenditures made by any person in cooperation, consultation, or concert with, or at the request or suggestion of, a candidate, the candidate's political campaign committees, or their agents, shall be considered to be a contribution to such candidate. For purposes of this subdivision (5), the financing by any person of the dissemination, distribution, or republication, in whole or in part, of any broadcast or any written, graphic, or other form of campaign materials prepared by the candidate, the candidate's political campaign committees, or their authorized agents shall be considered to be an expenditure.

**2-10-304. Loans.**

- (a) The limitations contained in this part do not apply to any loan of money by a financial institution as defined in § 45-10-102(3) that:
- (1) Is made in accordance with applicable law and in the ordinary course of business;
  - (2) Is made on a basis reasonably designed to assure repayment, evidenced by a written instrument, and subject to a payment due date or amortization schedule; and
  - (3) Bears the usual and customary interest rate of the lending institution.
- (b) An endorsement or guaranty of a loan made pursuant to subsection (a) shall be considered a contribution in the amount of the endorsement or guaranty and shall be subject to the limitations contained in this part. Where the written instrument does not specify the portion of the loan for which the endorser or guarantor is liable, each endorser or guarantor shall be considered to have made a contribution in that proportion of the unpaid balance that each endorser or guarantor bears to the total number of endorsers or guarantors.

**2-10-305. Retention or transfer of funds.**

The limits contained in this part do not apply to:

- (1) The retention of funds by a candidate pursuant to § 2-10-114(a)(1);
- (2) The transfer of funds by a candidate pursuant to § 2-10-114(a)(1) to a campaign fund of the same candidate for election to a different state or local public office; or
- (3) The transfer of funds by a candidate for election to a federal office to a campaign fund of the same candidate for election to a state or local public office.

**2-10-306. Aggregate limits - Exemptions.**

- (a) All contributions made by political campaign committees controlled by a political party on the national, state, or local level or by a caucus of such political party established by members of either house of the general assembly shall be considered to have been made by a single committee. Such contributions shall not, in the aggregate, exceed:
- (1) Two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) per election to any candidate in a statewide election;
  - (2) Forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) per election to any candidate for the senate; and
  - (3) Twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) per election to any candidate for any other state or local public office.
- (b) For purposes of this section, "contributions" does not include:

(1) Payment of the costs of preparation, display or mailing or other distribution with respect to printed slate cards, sample ballots, or other printed listings of three (3) or more candidates who are opposed for election. This exemption does not apply to costs incurred with respect to the preparation and display of listings made on broadcasting stations or in newspapers, magazines and similar types of general public political advertising such as billboards;

(2) Payment of the costs of voter registration and get-out-the-vote activities conducted by party committees, unless the payments are made on behalf of a clearly identified candidate and the payment can be directly attributed to that candidate;

(3) Expenditures for rent, personnel, overhead, general administrative, fundraising, and other day-to-day costs of party committees, unless the expenditures are made on behalf of a clearly identified candidate and the expenditure can be directly attributed to that candidate; or

(4) Expenditures for education campaign seminars and for training of campaign workers, unless the expenditures are made on behalf of a clearly identified candidate and the expenditure can be directly attributed to that candidate.

(c) (1) Each contribution limit established in subsection (a) shall be adjusted to reflect the percentage of change in the average consumer price index (all items-city average), as published by the United States department of labor, bureau of labor statistics, for the period of January 1, 1996, through December 31, 2010. Each such adjustment shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of one hundred dollars (\$100). The registry of election finance shall publish each such adjusted amount on its web site.

(2) On January 1, 2013, and every two (2) years thereafter, each contribution limit established in subsection (a), as adjusted pursuant to subdivision (c) (1), shall be further adjusted to reflect the percentage of change in the average consumer price index (all items-city average), as published by the United States department of labor, bureau of labor statistics, for the two-year period immediately preceding. Each such adjustment under this subdivision (C) (1) shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of one hundred dollars (\$100). The registry of election finance shall publish each such adjusted amount on its web site.

#### **2-10-307. Violations - Return of unlawful contributions.**

(a) No candidate or political campaign committee shall accept any contribution or make any expenditure in violation of the provisions of this part. No officer or employee of a political campaign committee shall accept a contribution made for the benefit or use of a candidate, or make any expenditure on behalf of a candidate, in violation of any limitation imposed on contributions and expenditures under this section.

(b) In keeping with the federal law, a contribution made or accepted in excess of the limitations established by this part shall not be a violation of this part if the candidate or the political campaign committee returns or refunds the contribution to the person who made the contribution within sixty (60) days of the candidate's or committee's receipt of the contribution.

#### **2-10-308. Penalties.**

(a) The registry of election finance may impose a maximum civil penalty for a violation of this part of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or one hundred fifteen percent (115%) of the amount of all contributions made or accepted in excess of the limitations established by this part, whichever is greater.

(b) Penalties imposed under this part shall be deposited into the state general fund.

(c) To request a waiver or reduction or in any way to contest a penalty imposed by the staff of the registry, a person shall file a petition with the registry. Such petition shall be considered as a contested case proceeding under the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5.

(d) If a civil penalty lawfully assessed against a candidate is not paid within thirty (30) days after the assessment becomes final, the candidate shall be ineligible to qualify for election to any state or local public office until such penalty is paid.

#### **2-10-309. Construction with federal law.**

In determining issues arising in regard to this part, the registry may rely on the precedents established under the federal law.

#### **2-10-310. Fund raising during general assembly session.**

(a) (1) Except as provided in subdivisions (a)(2) and (a)(3), from the convening of the general assembly in organizational session through the earlier of the last day of regular session or June 1 in odd years, and from the convening of the general assembly in regular session to the earlier of May 15 or the conclusion of the annual session in even years, and from the convening of the general assembly in any extraordinary session through the conclusion of such extraordinary session, no member of the general assembly or a member's

campaign committee or the governor or the governor's campaign committee shall conduct a fundraiser or solicit or accept contributions for the benefit of the caucus, any caucus member or member or candidate of the general assembly or governor.

(2) During such period, a member of the general assembly who is a candidate for a local public office shall be permitted to conduct fundraising events and solicit or accept contributions for such campaign for local public office only under the following conditions:

- (A) Such fundraising events may be held only in the county in which such member is a candidate for local public office;
- (B) Solicitations and acceptance of contributions for such purposes may only be made from individuals residing in such county;
- (C) Such fundraising events shall not be held, nor contributions be solicited nor accepted, on state property;
- (D) The member shall not be permitted to solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any actual or in-kind contribution during such period from a lobbyist or employer of a lobbyist; and
- (E) No other member of the general assembly or the campaign committee of such other member shall be permitted to solicit or accept contributions during such period for the member campaigning for local public office.

It shall be unlawful for any lobbyist or employer of a lobbyist to make any contribution to such member's campaign committee during such period for any purpose.

(3) All contributions raised as a result of fundraising or a fundraising event authorized and held in accordance with subdivision (a)(2) shall be reported on a form prescribed and provided by the registry of election finance for such purposes. Such form shall be filed with and attached to the applicable campaign finance disclosure report. The following disclosures shall be made on such form:

- (A) The amount of contributions collected as a result of such fundraising event;
  - (B) The date and place such fundraising event was held;
  - (C) The dates on which such contributions were accepted; and
  - (D) All other information required by law to be reported on a campaign financial disclosure report.
- (b) From the convening of the general assembly in organizational session through the earlier of the last day of regular session or June 1 in odd years, and from the convening of the general assembly in regular session to the earlier of May 15 or the conclusion of the annual session in even years, and from the convening of the general assembly in any extraordinary session through the conclusion of such extraordinary session, a political campaign committee controlled by a political party on the national, state, or local level, or controlled by a caucus of such political party established by members of either house of the general assembly, or established or controlled by any member of the general assembly, that makes contributions to a candidate for the general assembly or governor for election or to defray the expenses of such person's office shall not conduct a fundraiser, solicit or accept contributions for the benefit of the caucus, any caucus member or candidate for the general assembly or governor.
- (c) Excess funds for election to a local public office are not eligible for transfer under § 2-10-114 to a campaign account for election to the general assembly or governor.

**2-10-311. Limitations on cash contributions.**

- (a) No person shall make cash contributions to any candidate with respect to any election that, in the aggregate, exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00).
- (b) No person shall make cash contributions to any political campaign committee or multicandidate political campaign committee with respect to any election that, in the aggregate, exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00).
- (c) No political campaign committee or multicandidate political campaign committee shall make cash contributions to any candidate with respect to any election.
- (d) No political campaign committee or multicandidate political campaign committee shall make cash contributions to any other political campaign committee or multicandidate political campaign committee with respect to any election.

**2-10-312. [Repealed.]**

**PART 4**  
**GUBERNATORIAL INAUGURATION FINANCE DISCLOSURE**

**2-10-401. Short title.**

This part shall be known and may be cited as the “Gubernatorial Inauguration Finance Disclosure Act.”

**2-10-402. Part definitions.**

As used in this part, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) “Contribution” means any advance, conveyance, deposit, distribution, transfer of funds, loan, loan guaranty, payment, gift, or subscription, of money or like thing of value, and any contract, agreement, promise or other obligation, whether or not legally enforceable, made for the purpose of defraying any expenses of a governor or governor-elect's inauguration or the celebration of a governor or governor-elect's inauguration;

(2) “Multicandidate political campaign committee” means a political campaign committee to support or oppose two (2) or more candidates for public office or two (2) or more measures; and

(3) “Person” means an individual, limited liability company, partnership, limited liability partnership, committee, association, labor organization or any other organization or group of persons, but does not mean a corporation or the executive officers or other representatives of a corporation.

**2-10-403. Expense fund.**

Not later than thirty (30) days after being elected to the office of governor, the governor-elect shall establish a gubernatorial inauguration expense fund that shall be used to finance any event held for the purpose of celebrating the governor's inauguration. Such fund is subject to the contribution limits and reporting requirements provided in this part. The provisions of parts 1 and 3 of this chapter shall not apply to contributions made pursuant to this part.

**2-10-404. Contribution limits - Transfer of campaign funds.**

(a) No person shall make contributions for the gubernatorial inauguration that, in the aggregate, exceed two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500).

(b) No multicandidate political campaign committee shall make contributions for the gubernatorial inauguration that, in the aggregate, exceed seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500).

(c) No corporation or executive officers or other representatives of any corporation doing business within this state shall make contributions for the gubernatorial inauguration that, in the aggregate, exceed seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500).

(d) The governor-elect may transfer funds from the governor-elect's campaign fund to the inauguration fund.

**2-10-405. Financial disclosure statement.**

(a) The governor-elect shall file with the registry of election finance a statement of all contributions received and all expenditures made by or on behalf of the gubernatorial inauguration fund.

(b) A statement filed under this section shall consist of either:

(1) A statement that neither the contributions received nor the expenditures made during the period for which the statement is submitted exceeded one thousand dollars (\$1,000); or

(2) A statement setting forth:

(A) Under contributions, a list of all the contributions received, as follows:

(i) The statement shall list the full name and complete address of each person, multicandidate political campaign committee, or corporation contributing a total amount of more than five hundred dollars (\$500) during the period for which the statement is submitted, and the amount contributed by that person, multicandidate political campaign committee, or corporation. The statement shall include the date of the receipt of each contribution; and

(ii) The statement shall list as a single item the total amount of contributions of five hundred dollars (\$500) or less; and

(B) Under expenditures, a list of all expenditures made as follows:

(i) The statement shall list the full name and address of each person to whom a total amount of more than five hundred dollars (\$500) was paid during the period for which the statement is submitted, the total amount paid to that person, and the purpose thereof; and

(ii) The statement shall list the total amount of expenditures of five hundred dollars (\$500) or less each, by category, without showing the exact amount of or vouching for each such expenditure.

(c) The financial disclosure statement for contributions made up until thirty (30) days before any inauguration event shall be filed no later than ten (10) days before the governor's inauguration. The financial disclosure statement for all other contributions shall be filed no later than thirty (30) days after the governor's inauguration.

**2-10-406. Unused funds.**

(a) The governor may hold over funds from the governor's first inauguration to be used in a second inauguration if the governor is re-elected. If the governor is either in a second term, chooses not to run for re-election or is not re-elected, the governor has ninety (90) days to donate any funds remaining in the gubernatorial inauguration fund to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The governor may request from the registry of election finance an extension of an additional sixty (60) days to donate such remaining funds.

(b) Once the funds have been donated as provided in subsection (a), a financial disclosure statement shall be filed with the registry of election finance disclosing who received such funds and the amount of such donation.

**CAMPAIGN  
FINANCE  
RULES**

**RULES  
OF  
THE TENNESSEE REGISTRY OF ELECTION FINANCE**

**CHAPTER 0530-1-1  
CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE RULES**

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**0530—1—1—.01 DEFINITIONS.**

- (1) *Campaign Account* - is a separate bank account which must be maintained by a candidate or political campaign committee into which all campaign contributions shall be deposited and from which all campaign monies shall be expended.
- (2) *Candidate* - shall include an individual who is actively waging a write-in campaign or who has authorized others to wage a write-in campaign on his/her behalf.
- (3) *Goods or Services Received on Credit* - are those that are obtained for a campaign from a person or business where credit is extended in the ordinary course of the business and the terms are substantially similar to the extension of credit to nonpolitical debtors. "Goods or services received on credit" do not include in-kind contributions.
- (4) *Investment Accounts* - are accounts such as savings, mutual funds and certificates of deposits (CDs) into which campaign funds may be held for investment purposes.
- (5) *Political Campaign Committee* - includes a multicandidate political campaign committee, single-candidate political campaign committee and single-measure political campaign committee, unless reference is made to a specific type of political campaign committee.
- (6) *Single-Measure Political Campaign Committee* is a committee which is receiving or expending funds to support or oppose a proposal(s) submitted to the people of the entire state or any political subdivision for approval or rejection at an election. For purposes of these rules, an organization or committee that is receiving or expending funds to support or defeat an issue that is being considered by the General Assembly or by a city or county legislative body that is not yet a proposal submitted to the people for approval or rejection at an election is not a single measure political campaign committee.

**0530—1—1—.02 BOOKKEEPING PROCEDURES.**

- (1) A candidate or political campaign committee shall not commingle personal funds or any other monies with campaign account funds.
- (2) A campaign contribution shall be deposited into a candidate's or political campaign committee's campaign account within ten (10) business days of the candidate's or committee receipt of the contribution.
- (3) All campaign funds deposited into an investment account must come from the campaign account. All funds withdrawn from an investment account must be deposited back into the campaign account.
- (4) All expenditures from campaign monies shall be made from a candidate's or political campaign committee's campaign account.
- (5) A candidate or political campaign committee shall maintain the following financial records:



- (a) A list with name, amount and date of receipt of all campaign contributions received. The list shall be able to distinguish between contributors with like names.
  - (b) Copies of checks, bank statements and vendor receipts.
- (6) When feasible, copies of all campaign contribution checks received should be maintained by a candidate or political campaign committee.
  - (7) A candidate or political campaign committee shall maintain all accounting records and required documentation listed in paragraphs 5 and 6 for at least two (2) years after the date of the election to which the records refer or the date of the statement, whichever is later. However, if investigative procedures or a contested case hearing have been initiated against a candidate or political campaign committee, accounting records relating to a campaign account and/or a campaign financial disclosure report must be maintained by the candidate or committee until the investigation or contested case hearing has been completed and the Registry gives approval for the records to be destroyed.
  - (8) A candidate or political campaign committee shall have bank account reconciliations performed for a campaign account to ensure that the bank account balances with the financial disclosure reports filed by the candidate or committee.
  - (9) "Best Efforts" to obtain the occupation, employer and complete address for contributors includes the following:
    - (a) Notifying the contributor, by first class mail, that additional information concerning the contributor is required under state law.
    - (b) Including on a written solicitation for contributions a clear request for the contributor's name, address, occupation and employer and by accurately stating that the information is required under state law for contributions of more than one hundred dollars (\$100).
    - (c) Notifying the contributor orally, documented in writing, that additional information concerning the contributor is required under state law. The written documentation should include the name of the person spoken to, the date of the conversation, the information provided and the telephone number, if applicable.
  - (10) If the occupation for any contributor is listed as "retired", "student", "housewife", or "househusband" then the candidate is not required to obtain an employer.

**0530—1—1—03 CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS.**

- (1) A campaign contribution is deemed to have been made by a multicandidate political campaign committee and reportable in the period in which the check or other written instrument is written to a candidate or political campaign committee. A cash campaign contribution is considered to have been made and to be reportable by a multicandidate political campaign committee in the period in which the money is delivered to a candidate or political campaign committee.
- (2) A campaign contribution is considered made to and reportable by a candidate or political committee when the contribution is delivered to a candidate or political campaign committee, or any agent thereof.
- (3) Personal funds of a candidate or any personal loan used by a candidate for routine living expenses that he or she would have incurred without candidacy, including the costs of food and residence, are not campaign contributions.
- (4) A campaign contribution that is made by a PAC by check or other similar written instrument must be provided to a candidate or candidate's political campaign committee within thirty (30) days of the date that the check or other written instrument is written.
- (5) A political campaign committee making an in-kind campaign contribution must notify a candidate or political campaign committee receiving the contribution of the amount and purpose of the contribution, in writing, within five (5) business days after the in-kind contribution is made or performed.
- (6) An in-kind contribution is the provision of any goods or services to a candidate or political campaign committee without charge or at a charge which is less than the fair market value for such goods or services.
- (7) Where goods or services are provided to a candidate or political campaign committee at a charge which is less than the fair market value for such goods or services, the candidate or committee must report as an in-kind contribution the difference between the amount paid for the goods or services and the fair market value of such goods or services.

- (8) Examples of in-kind contributions that are considered goods include, but are not limited to:
  - (a) campaign materials, such as campaign literature, brochures, bumper stickers, campaign advertisements;
  - (b) postage;
  - (c) equipment and other similar supplies;
  - (d) Reserved;
  - (e) polling or survey data.
- (9) Examples of in-kind contributions that are considered services include, but are not limited to:
  - (a) providing of paid personnel for telephone banks and distribution of campaign materials;
  - (b) consulting services.
- (10) If a multi-candidate political campaign committee making an in-kind contribution to a candidate or political campaign committee is in a dispute with a vendor over the amount of an expense, the committee shall make a reasonable determination of the value of the in-kind contribution. The method to determine that amount shall be documented by the committee, and this documentation shall be submitted with the financial disclosure report on which the in-kind contribution is reported. Procedures set forth in the rules then should be followed for notifying the candidate or political campaign committee receiving the in-kind contribution.

**0530—1—1—.04 EXPENDITURES FROM CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS.**

- (1) An expenditure made by check or other written instrument is deemed to have been made and is reportable during the reporting period in which the check or other written instrument is written. A cash expenditure shall be deemed to be made and is reportable during the reporting period in which the money is delivered to the payee.
- (2) Any disbursement out of campaign funds by a candidate or political campaign committee shall be reported as an expenditure by the candidate or political campaign committee on a campaign financial disclosure statement for the proper reporting period.
- (3) When providing the purpose of an expenditure or category of expenditures as required by T.C.A. §2-10-107(a)(2)(B), a candidate or political committee shall provide a brief description of why the disbursement(s) was made. The description must clearly show that the expenditure was an allowable expense under campaign financial disclosure statutes. Examples of descriptions which shall be considered sufficient include the following: advertising, printing, phone banks and postage. However, descriptions such as miscellaneous, campaign expenditure, other expenses, advance reimbursement or credit card payment shall not be deemed sufficient.
- (4) A candidate who is an officeholder and who has an unexpended balance of campaign contributions may expend those monies for expenses which are incidental to the candidate's holding public office. If a candidate/officeholder incurs expenses which would exist regardless of being an officeholder, those expenses are not considered to be incidental to holding office and are not ordinary and necessary expenses incurred in connection with the office of the officeholder for purposes of T.C.A. §§2—10—114(a)(7).
- (5) Whether an expenditure of campaign funds by a candidate is made for a political purpose depends upon all the facts and circumstances surrounding the expenditure. An activity engaged in between elections by a candidate which is directly related to and supports the selection, nomination or elections of that individual to public office is considered political activity. An expense which would be incurred by an individual regardless of that person's candidacy for public office is considered an expenditure for a nonpolitical purpose under T.C.A. §§2—10—114(b) and may not be made from the individual's campaign funds, except as set forth in T.C.A. §§2—10—114(a).

**0530—1—1—.05 FILING OF CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REPORTS.**

- (1) A report filed using the Registry's Internet filing system shall be considered timely filed if the report is filed before midnight on the due date of the report.
- (2) When, because of the closeness in time between two (2) elections, a post-election campaign financial disclosure report would be filed by a candidate or political campaign committee after the subsequent election in which the candidate or political

campaign committee is also involved, no post-election campaign financial disclosure report for the first election is required to be filed by the candidate or committee.

- (3) No campaign financial disclosure statement required to be filed by the Campaign Financial Disclosure Law may be filed before the day following the ending date of the reporting period, by a candidate or political campaign committee such that there is a failure by the candidate or the political campaign committee to disclose the required campaign financial information for the full reporting period as required by law.
- (4) A document delivered to the Registry office after normal business hours shall be considered filed at the beginning of the next business day. Normal business hours shall be considered Monday through Friday (except holidays), 8:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m.
- (5) When the filing deadline for any campaign financial disclosure statement falls on a weekend or a holiday, resulting in the closing of the Registry Office, the disclosure statement is to be filed with the Registry by the candidate or political campaign committee on the next business day.

**0530—1—1—.06 CAMPAIGN LOANS.**

- (1) A campaign loan must be disclosed by a candidate or political campaign committee during the reporting period that the loan is made. A loan is deemed to have been made when the candidate or political campaign committee obtaining the loan receives the monies from the loan.
- (2) A campaign loan must continue to be disclosed by a candidate or political campaign committee on campaign financial disclosure reports until the loan is paid back in full, or a statement has been filed with the appropriate campaign financial disclosure statement by the candidate or committee stating that the loan will not be repaid and shall be considered a contribution to the campaign.

**0530—1—1—.07 PAC ANNUAL FEE.**

- (1) No later than January 31 of each year, each registered multicandidate political campaign committee (PAC) shall pay an annual registration fee of \$100.
- (2) Multicandidate political campaign committees registered by any statewide political party or a subsidiary are exempt from the annual registration fee.
- (3) Any political campaign committee that registers as a new PAC during any year shall pay the registration fee at the time of registration.

**0530—1—1—.08 SINGLE MEASURE COMMITTEES.**

- (1) Before a single measure political campaign committee may receive any contributions or make any expenditures to support or defeat a measure on a ballot, it must certify the name and address of its political treasurer.
- (2) If the post referendum campaign financial disclosure statement filed by a single measure political campaign committee shows an unexpended balance of contributions, continuing debts and obligations, or an expenditure deficit, the single measure committee shall file an annual supplemental disclosure statement each year from the date of the post-referendum report until the campaign account shows no unexpended balance, continuing debts and obligations, or deficit.

**0530—1—1—.09 COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES.**

- (1) A political party's county executive committee acting as a political campaign committee and filing campaign financial disclosure reports does not have to disclose the receipts and expenditures used by it to perform its functions required by the state election laws, where its annual receipts and expenditures are less than \$10,000 and where those receipts and expenditures are separated from and maintained in a fund separate and apart from any funds used by its as a political campaign committee. If the funds are commingled, the county executive committee must report its receipts and expenditures of all funds on its campaign financial disclosure reports.
- (2) A political party's county executive committee whose annual receipts and expenditures are \$10,000 or more must disclose its receipts and expenditures of all funds on its campaign financial disclosure reports.

**0530—1—1—.10 GOODS OR SERVICES RECEIVED ON CREDIT.**

- (1) Goods and services received on credit which are not paid for during the reporting period for which a disclosure statement is filed must be disclosed by a candidate or political campaign committee as follows:
  - (a) Goods and services received on credit totaling \$100 or less from each person shall be totaled and reported as a lump sum amount on a campaign financial disclosure report.
  - (b) Goods and services received on credit totaling more than \$100 from a source shall be itemized. The full name and complete address of each person who provided such goods and services on credit shall be disclosed, along with the total amount of goods and services provided by that person and a description of the goods and services.

**0530—1—1—11 INFORMAL SHOW CAUSE HEARINGS.**

- (1) When Registry staff presents documentation to the Registry indicating that a candidate or political campaign committee has possibly violated the Campaign Financial Disclosure Law and before the Registry takes action to assess civil penalties for a violation, the Registry shall send a written notification to the candidate or committee of the allegations and the class and maximum amount of civil penalties which would be assessed for such a violation. Additionally, this notification shall inform the candidate or committee of the date, place and time of the Registry's next regularly scheduled meeting and provide the candidate or committee the opportunity to choose one (1) of the following options:
  - (a) The candidate, designee of a candidate, or committee shall be provided an opportunity to personally appear before the Registry at its next regularly scheduled meeting to show why civil penalties should not be assessed; or
  - (b) The candidate, designee of a candidate or committee must be provided an opportunity to submit a sworn statement to the Registry which has been sworn to before a notary public, along with any pertinent attachments, to show why civil penalties should not be assessed.
- (2) The opportunity provided to a candidate, the designee of a candidate, or committee to personally appear before the Registry or to submit a sworn statement for the Registry's consideration as to whether to assess civil penalties against the candidate or committee is not in lieu of any contested case hearing rights that the candidate or committee may have pursuant to *Tennessee Administrative Procedures Act, T.C.A. §4—5—301, et seq.*
- (3) In order for a candidate, the designee of a candidate, or committee to take advantage of the opportunity to personally appear before the Registry at its regularly scheduled meeting, the candidate or committee must request such an appearance in writing. A candidate or committee has the right to appear with legal counsel at the Registry meeting.
- (4) In order for a candidate, the designee of a candidate, or committee to take advantage of the opportunity to submit a sworn statement, along with any pertinent attachments for the Registry's determination as to whether to assess civil penalties, the statement and any attachments must be received in the Registry's office no later than eight (8) days before the day of the Registry's meeting in order to have the information considered by the Registry at that meeting. A sworn statement received less than eight (8) days before the Registry's meeting will have the matter continued until the Registry's next meeting.

**0530—1—1—12 ISSUANCE AND APPEAL OF CIVIL PENALTY ASSESSMENT ORDERS.**

- (1) A civil penalty order issued by the Registry assessing penalties against a candidate or political campaign committee cannot be issued unless a majority of the Registry members present have voted that such an order be issued. Once a majority of the Registry members have voted that such an order should be issued, the chairperson or executive director shall have the authority to issue the order on behalf of the Registry.
- (2)
  - (a) A civil penalty order assessing civil penalties shall be mailed by registered or certified mail to the candidate or political campaign committee to whom the order is issued, and the party to whom it is issued shall be provided thirty (30) days from the date of the issuance of the order to either appeal the Registry's order pursuant to the procedures provided for under Tennessee's Administrative Procedures Act, *T.C.A. §4—5—301, et seq.*, or to pay the assessed penalties to the Registry.
  - (b) If the civil penalty assessment order is returned to the Registry from the United States Postal Service as unclaimed, then the order shall be reissued and mailed by the Registry by overnight mail delivery to the candidate or political campaign committee. The candidate or committee shall then have thirty (30) days from the date of the reissuance of the order to either appeal the Registry's order pursuant to procedures provided under the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in *T.C.A.*, Title 4, Chapter 5, Part 3, or to pay the assessed penalties to the Registry.

- (3) In order for a candidate or a political campaign committee to appeal an order issued by the Registry assessing civil penalties, the candidate or political campaign committee shall file a petition with the Registry. This petition shall be considered a request for a contested case hearing pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, *T.C.A. §4—5—301, et seq.*
- (4) If the Registry's order assessing civil penalties is not appealed within thirty (30) days of its issuance by the candidate or political campaign committee to whom it was issued, the order becomes a final order.
- (5) If a candidate or political campaign committee fails to either appeal a civil penalty order issued to it by the Registry or to pay the Registry the assessed penalties and the Registry's order becomes final without the party taking any such action, upon the order becoming final, the Registry shall forward the matter to the State Attorney General and Reporter's office. The Registry shall request that the Attorney General take legal action on its behalf to collect the civil penalties from the candidate or committee against whom the action has been taken.

**0530—1—1—13 RECONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF CIVIL PENALTY ASSESSMENT ORDERS.**

- (1) If a candidate or political campaign committee against whom a civil penalty assessment order has been issued by the Registry wishes to request that the Registry reconsider the matter, the candidate or committee must follow these procedures to have the Registry consider the request:
  - (a) The candidate or committee must file a written request with the Registry asking that the assessment of civil penalties against the candidate or committee be reconsidered by the Registry. The written request for reconsideration must be filed with the Registry within fourteen (14) days of the date of the issuance of the Registry's order assessing civil penalties.
  - (b) For a written request for reconsideration to be considered by the Registry, the candidate or committee must include additional information concerning the matter that was not available for the Registry's consideration at its meeting at which the civil penalty order was issued by the Registry. If no additional information is included in the request for reconsideration, the Registry may choose not to reconsider the matter.
  - (c) If the candidate or political campaign committee files a written request for reconsideration of an assessment of civil penalties with the Registry and asks to make a personal appearance before the Registry at a regularly scheduled meeting and, without good cause, fails to appear at that meeting without having notified the Registry prior to the meeting, the Registry will deny the request for reconsideration.
  - (d) While a request for reconsideration of a civil penalty order by a candidate or political campaign committee is pending before the Registry, the Registry's order assessing penalties does not become final until a determination is made by the Registry as to the request for reconsideration. Upon a vote of a majority of the Registry members to deny a candidate's or political campaign committee's request for reconsideration of any civil penalty assessment order, the Registry shall issue an order denying the request and providing the candidate or committee ten (10) days after the date of the issuance of the order to appeal the original assessment order under the *Tennessee Administrative Procedures Act* before the order becomes a final order.

**0530—1—1—14 ISSUANCE OF ADVISORY OPINIONS BY THE REGISTRY.**

- (1) A candidate may submit to the Registry a written request for an advisory opinion as to the application of the Campaign Financial Disclosure Law. In submitting such a request, the candidate shall include a complete description of all facts relevant to the specific transaction or activity which is the subject of the opinion request.
- (2) After reviewing a candidate's request for an advisory opinion and if the Registry staff determines that more information from the candidate is necessary in order for the Registry to properly respond to the request, the staff shall notify the candidate of the additional information which should be submitted to the Registry.
- (3) If the Registry staff determines that an advisory opinion request contains a complete description of the proposed transaction or activity, the staff shall notify the candidate making the request that it was received by the Registry and that the matter shall be presented by the staff to the board at its next scheduled meeting for an advisory opinion to be issued.
- (4) After reviewing a candidate's advisory opinion request and upon determining that the request presents essentially the same fact situation or proposed activity which was the subject of an advisory opinion previously issued by the Registry, the staff may recommend to the board at its next regularly scheduled meeting that a copy of that earlier opinion be sent to the candidate, in lieu of issuing a new opinion. If a majority of the members of the Registry present and voting at the meeting vote to adopt the staff's recommendation, a copy of the previous opinion shall be mailed to the candidate with a memorandum explaining that the analysis and conclusion(s) contained in that previous opinion are applicable to the activity being proposed.

by the candidate. However, if a majority of the members present and voting at the meeting determine that a new advisory opinion should be issued addressing the candidate's opinion request, the procedures outlined in paragraph 5 through 8 of this rule shall be followed in issuing the opinion, where applicable.

- (5) The Registry staff shall review the question presented in the candidate's request and research the applicable provisions of the Campaign Disclosure Law. A draft of an advisory opinion shall be presented to the members of the Registry at the board's next meeting, with a recommendation from the staff. After reviewing the draft, the members of the Registry present at the meeting shall then vote as to whether to issue the opinion as drafted.
- (6) If a majority of the members of the Registry present and voting at a meeting vote to issue an advisory opinion as drafted by the staff, the advisory opinion shall be issued under the signature of the chairperson. The opinion shall be provided to the candidate who requested it. Additionally, the Executive Director shall forward copies of the opinion to the office of Legislative Legal Services and to all local county election commission offices for dissemination. A copy of the opinion shall be retained on file at the Registry office for public inspection and copying.
- (7) If a majority of the members of the Registry present and voting at a meeting vote not to adopt an opinion as drafted, any board recommended changes shall be made in the opinion by the staff. If the changes voted by the board are minor changes, the staff shall be directed to make those specific changes, and the opinion shall be issued under the signature of the chairperson without further review by the board. The procedures for disseminating the advisory opinion as set forth in paragraph (6) shall then be followed.
- (8) If a majority of the Registry members present and voting at a meeting vote changes to be made to a draft advisory opinion which require the staff to rewrite the opinion with a different result, the Executive Director shall resent another draft of the opinion to the board members at the next scheduled meeting of the Registry.

#### **0530—1—1—.15 LOCAL ELECTION REPORTING.**

- (1) Each county election commission shall notify the Registry of each local election held in their county at the same time that public notice is posted.
- (2) On a form prescribed by the Registry, the notice of election from the county election commission shall provide the Registry with the following information for each local election to be held: county, city (if applicable), qualifying deadline, date of election and offices on the ballot. The form shall be signed by an official from the county election commission.
- (3) For each campaign financial disclosure report required to be filed by a local candidate, the county election commission shall, on a form prescribed by the Registry, certify that all candidates have filed the report timely or provide a list of candidates that have failed to timely file the report. The form shall be signed by an official from the county election commission.
- (4) For each candidate listed by the county election commission as failing to timely file a report, the county election commission shall provide the Registry with a copy of the original notification letter, certified notification letter, acknowledgement card from the certified letter and report (if applicable).

**RULES  
OF  
TENNESSEE REGISTRY OF ELECTION FINANCE**

**CHAPTER 0530-1-3  
CAMPAIGN FINANCE RULES**

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**0530—1—3—.01 ELECTIONS.**

- (1) A primary election, general election, run-off election or special election is each considered a separate election with separate contribution limits.

**0530—1—3—.02 CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS.**

- (1) Contributions from a candidate's family members are subject to the same dollar limitations as contributions from any other individual.
- (2) A child under eighteen (18) years of age may make contributions from monies he/she owns or controls if the child knowingly and voluntarily makes such contributions. Children may not use funds provided as a gift to them for the purpose of making a contribution.
- (3) If a person is a candidate for more than one state or local office, an individual or multicandidate political campaign committee may make contributions which do not exceed the dollar limits as set forth in T.C.A. §§2-10-302 and 2-10-306, to the candidate or his/her authorized political committees for each election for each office, as long as:
  - (a) Separate campaign bank accounts are maintained for each campaign.
  - (b) Each campaign shall have different and distinct campaign names (i.e. John Doe for State Senate and John Doe for Property Assessor).
  - (c) Separate contribution checks must be written to each separate campaign.
- (4) A candidate who accepts contributions for an election in a particular election year may not accept contributions for the same office in any future election year until the completion of all elections in which the candidate is involved in the present election year. (I.e. An individual who is a candidate in a 2000 election cannot collect monies for the 2002 elections for the same office until all the 2000 elections in which the person is a candidate have been completed for that office.)

**0530—1—3—.03 ATTRIBUTION OF CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS.**

- (1) A candidate's campaign financial disclosure report must disclose the particular election for which each itemized contribution is allocated. The Registry staff will return a campaign financial disclosure report to a candidate for such designations if the allocations are not indicated on the report.
- (2) A candidate who has outstanding loans and/or obligations from a previous election cycle may accept contributions in the current election to apply to the loans of the previous election. However, these contributions count towards the current election campaign contribution limits whether they are used to pay off the previous campaign loans and/or obligations or used in the current election campaign.
- (3) Contributions made by written instrument, such as a check, shall be attributed to the payor of the instrument, unless otherwise indicated.

- (4) Any reduction in the unpaid balance of a loan shall reduce proportionally the amount endorsed or guaranteed by each endorser or guarantor. Once the loan is repaid in full, the guarantee or endorsement no longer counts against such guarantor's or endorser's contribution limits.

**0530—1—3—.04 CERTIFICATION OF POLITICAL TREASURER.**

- (1) After a candidate completes his/her last election in an election year, a candidate must file an "Appointment of Political Treasurer's Statement" to certify the name of the campaign treasurer with the Registry and/or local county election commission, as appropriate, before the candidate may receive any additional contributions for a future election or for constituent services, unless the candidate has an outstanding loan or obligation from a prior election. The candidate may utilize the same individual as political treasurer that has been used in a past election cycle, but the new designation of treasurer must be filed.

**0530—1—3—.05 BOOKKEEPING PROCEDURES.**

- (1) A candidate must adopt a record-keeping system to distinguish between contributions made for a primary election and those made for a general election. Contributions received for a general election may not be spent in the preceding primary election, but any funds remaining from a primary election may be used in a subsequent general election.
- (2) A candidate through his/her record-keeping system must be able to determine the aggregate amount of contributions received per election from each contributor.
- (3) A candidate must have a bookkeeping system in place documenting contributions and expenditures. The Registry recommends that candidates and their committees maintain copies of all contributions received or in the alternative a journal or listing of contributions and expenditures.

**0530—1—3—.06 DISCLOSURE OF AFFILIATION OF MULTICANDIDATE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES (PACs).**

- (1) When registering as a multicandidate political campaign committee (PAC), a committee must disclose its affiliation with any other PACs and provide the names and addresses of those PACs. Such affiliations must be disclosed in the PAC's appointment of political treasurer statement. A committee must notify the Registry if it later becomes affiliated with any other PACs and provide the names and addresses of those PACs within thirty (30) days of the affiliation occurring.

**0530—1—3—.07 INDEPENDENT CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES.**

- (1) "Independent expenditure" means an expenditure by a person for a communication expressly advocating the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate which is not made with the cooperation or with the prior consent of, or in consultation with, or at the request of, or suggestion of, a candidate or any agent or authorized committee of such candidate.
- (2) "Expressly advocating" means any communication containing a message advocating election or defeat, including but not limited to the name of the candidate, or expressions such as "vote for", "elect", "support", "cast your ballot for", or "vote against", "defeat" or "reject".
- (3) "Clearly identified candidate" means that the name of the candidate appears, a photograph or drawing of the candidate appears, or the identity of the candidate is otherwise apparent by unambiguous reference.
- (4) "Made with the cooperation or with the prior consent of, or in consultation with, or at the request or suggestion of, a candidate or any agent or authorized committee of the candidate" means:
  - (a) Any arrangement, coordination, or direction by the candidate or his/her agent prior to the publication, distribution, display, or broadcast of the communication. An expenditure will be presumed to be so made when it is:
    1. Based on information about the candidate's plans, projects, or needs provided to the expending person by the candidate, or by the candidate's agent(s), with a view toward having an expenditure made; or
    2. Made by or through any person who is, or has been, authorized to raise or expend funds, who is, or has been, an officer of any authorized committee, or who is, or has been, receiving any form of compensation or reimbursement from the candidate, the candidate's committee or agent.



- (5) “Agent” means any person who has actual oral or written authority, either express or implied, to make or to authorize the making of expenditures on behalf of a candidate, or means any person who has been placed in a position within the campaign organization where it would reasonably appear that in the ordinary course of campaign-related activities he or she may authorize expenditures.
- (6) An expenditure not qualifying under this section as an independent expenditure shall be an in-kind contribution to the candidate.
- (7) No expenditure by an authorized committee of a candidate on behalf of that candidate shall qualify as an independent expenditure.
- (8) Every political committee, which makes independent expenditures, shall report all such expenditures on campaign disclosure reporting forms pursuant to T.C.A. §2-1-105(d). Independent expenditures totaling more than \$100 to a single payee during a reporting period made to support or oppose a clearly identified candidate shall be itemized, disclosing the name and address of the payee, the purpose, date and amount of the expenditure and the office sought by the candidate. Those independent expenditures totaling \$100 or less to a single payee during a reporting period shall be reported as a total by categories.

**0530—1—3—.08 USE OF A CONDUIT.**

- (1) In determining whether a person(s) is using directly or indirectly a committee, group or other organization as a conduit or intermediary to make a campaign contribution in violation of T.C.A. § 2-10-303(3), the Registry of Election Finance, in its discretion, may consider any or all of the following factors. The Registry is not limited to these factors, however, and any additional relevant information may be received and considered as to whether a contribution was made directly or indirectly using a conduit or intermediary in violation of T.C.A. § 2-10-303(3).

(a) Contributions

1. All contribution(s) received by the committee or organization came from a single source.
2. The percentage of contributions received by the committee or organization from a single source.
3. The number of contributors to the committee or organization.
4. Whether an individual contributor, who has reached the individual limit on contributions to a particular candidate, has made a contribution(s) to a committee or organization, that, within a ninety (90) day period of receiving such contribution(s), makes an expenditure to the same candidate.
5. The contribution history of the contributor to the committee or organization.
6. The relationship between the contributor(s) to the committee or organization and the officials of the committee or organization.
7. The affiliations, relationships or connections between the committee or organization and other committees and organizations.

(b) Expenditures

1. The percentage of available funds given by the committee or organization to a single candidate.
2. The number of expenditures made by the committee or organization to candidates.
3. The history of the committee or organization in making expenditures.
4. Whether multiple expenditures were made to a single candidate in an election cycle.

(c) Timing

1. The time frame of contributions received by the committee or organization.
2. The time frame of expenditures made by the committee or organization.
3. The length of time the committee or organization has been active.

4. The timing of the relationship between contributions received by a committee or organization and expenditures made to candidates.

- (2) There shall be a rebuttable presumption that a committee or organization is acting as a conduit or intermediary for purposes of T.C.A. § 2-10-303(3) if:
- (a) the committee or organization has fewer than three (3) contributors;
  - (b) these contributors provide seventy-five percent (75%) or more of the committee's or organization's total contributions within a ninety (90) day period; and
  - (c) seventy-five percent (75%) or more of the committee's or organization's political contribution expenditure(s) are to a single candidate or committee within a ninety (90) day period;

provided, however, that this rebuttable presumption shall not apply to a committee or organization making less than \$7,500 in political contribution expenditures in any given calendar year.

**0530—1—3—.09 ADMINISTRATIVE TERMINATION OF A MULTICANDIDATE COMMITTEE'S REGISTRATION.**

- (1) The Registry of Election Finance may administratively terminate the registration of a multicandidate committee upon the occurrence of any of the following events:
- (a) A multicandidate committee fails to file quarterly reports for two (2) straight quarters.
  - (b) The address on file with the Registry of Election Finance for the multicandidate committee is no longer active and no forwarding address is available.
  - (c) The multicandidate committee has been assessed and not paid a civil penalty within ninety (90) days of its becoming final.
- (2) The Registry of Election Finance shall send notice to the address of the multicandidate committee's treasurer on file of the Registry's intent to administratively terminate the committee's registration. To object to the proposed termination the Treasurer or other person authorized to act on behalf of the committee shall respond to the Registry in writing within thirty (30) days of the date of the mailing of this notice. If the Registry receives no response by the end of the thirty (30) day period, the multicandidate committee's registration will be administratively terminated and the committee shall no longer be permitted to avail itself of the higher contribution limits conferred by law on multicandidate committees.
- (3) A multicandidate committee that has been administratively terminated may reinstate its registration by performing all of the following actions, if applicable:
- (a) filing the reports for the periods that were the basis of the prior termination;
  - (b) paying any and all civil penalties that may have been imposed by the Registry, as well as any accrued interest and other costs, including but not limited to, any court costs;
  - (c) providing the correct current mailing address, street address and telephone number for the chief executive officer and the Treasurer of the multicandidate committee; and
  - (d) performing such other steps as may be reasonably required by the Registry pursuant to the statutes and regulations.