

CHAPTER 211A

CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL REPORTS

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211A.01 DEFINITIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Application.** The definitions in chapter 200 and this section apply to this chapter.

Subd. 2. **Ballot question.** "Ballot question" means a proposition placed on the ballot to be voted on by the voters of one or more political subdivisions but not by all the voters of the state.

Subd. 3. **Candidate.** "Candidate" means an individual who seeks nomination or election to a county, municipal, school district, or other political subdivision office. This definition does not include an individual seeking a judicial office. For purposes of sections 211A.01 to 211A.05 and 211A.07, "candidate" also includes a candidate for the United States Senate or House of Representatives.

Subd. 4. **Committee.** "Committee" means a corporation or association or persons acting together to influence the nomination, election, or defeat of a candidate or to promote or defeat a ballot question. Promoting or defeating a ballot question includes efforts to qualify or prevent a proposition from qualifying for placement on the ballot.

Subd. 5. **Contribution.** "Contribution" means anything of monetary value that is given or loaned to a candidate or committee for a political purpose. "Contribution" does not include a service provided without compensation by an individual.

Subd. 6. **Disbursement.** "Disbursement" means money, property, office, position, or any other thing of value that passes or is directly or indirectly conveyed, given, promised, paid, expended, pledged, contributed, or lent. "Disbursement" does not include payment by a county, municipality, school district, or other political subdivision for election-related expenditures required or authorized by law.

Subd. 7. **Filing officer.** "Filing officer" means the officer authorized by law to accept affidavits of candidacy or nominating petitions for an office or the officer authorized by law to place a ballot question on the ballot.

Subd. 8. **Political purposes.** An act is done for "political purposes" if it is of a nature, done with the intent, or done in a way to influence or tend to influence, directly or indirectly, voting at a primary or an election or if it is done because a person is about to vote, has voted, or has refrained from voting at a primary or an election.

History: 1988 c 578 art 2 s 1; 1990 c 453 s 22

211A.02 FINANCIAL REPORT.

Subdivision 1. **When and where filed by committees.** (a) A committee or a candidate who receives contributions or makes disbursements of more than \$750 in a calendar year shall submit an initial report to the filing officer within 14 days after the candidate or committee receives or makes disbursements of more than \$750 and shall continue to make the reports listed in paragraph (b) until a final report is filed.

(b) The committee or candidate must file a report by January 31 of each year following the year when the initial report was filed and in a year when the candidate's name or a ballot question appears on the ballot, the candidate or committee shall file a report:

- (1) ten days before the primary or special primary;
- (2) ten days before the general election or special election; and

(3) 30 days after a general or special election.

Subd. 2. **Information required.** The report to be filed by a candidate or committee must include:

- (1) the name of the candidate or ballot question;
- (2) the name and address of the person responsible for filing the report;
- (3) the total amount of receipts and expenditures for the period from the last previous report to five days before the current report is due;
- (4) the purpose for each expenditure; and
- (5) the name of any individual or committee that during the year has made one or more contributions that in the aggregate are equal to or greater than \$500.

Subd. 3. **Municipal charter provisions and special laws saved.** The provisions of this section requiring the filing of reports are in addition to the provisions of any municipal charter requiring the filing of reports in connection with a municipal primary, general election, special primary, or special election, but they do not replace special laws providing filing requirements for a municipality.

Subd. 4. **Congressional candidates.** Candidates for election to the United States House of Representatives or Senate and any political committees raising money and making disbursements exclusively on behalf of any one of those candidates may file copies of their financial disclosures required by federal law in lieu of the financial statement required by this section.

History: 1988 c 578 art 2 s 2; 1989 c 291 art 1 s 30

211A.03 FINAL REPORT.

A candidate or committee may file a final report when all debts have been settled and all assets in excess of \$100 in the aggregate are disposed of. The final report may be filed at any time and must include the kinds of information contained in the financial statements required by section 211A.02 for the period from the last previous report to the date of the final report.

History: 1988 c 578 art 2 s 3

211A.04 SECRETARY OF STATE'S DUTIES.

Subdivision 1. **Report forms.** The secretary of state shall prepare blanks for reports required by section 211A.02. Copies must be furnished through the county auditor or otherwise, as the secretary of state finds expedient, to a committee upon request or to a candidate upon filing for office.

Subd. 2. **Digest of laws.** The secretary of state, with the approval of the attorney general, shall prepare and print an easily understandable annotated digest of this chapter. The secretary of state shall distribute the digest in the same manner as the report forms required by subdivision 1.

History: 1988 c 578 art 2 s 4

211A.05 FAILURE TO FILE STATEMENT.

Subdivision 1. **Penalty.** A candidate who intentionally fails to file a report required by section 211A.02 is guilty of a misdemeanor. The treasurer of a committee formed to promote or defeat a ballot question who intentionally fails to file a report required by section 211A.02 is guilty of a misdemeanor. Each candidate or treasurer of a committee formed to promote or defeat a ballot question shall certify to the filing officer that all reports required by section 211A.02 have been submitted to the filing officer or that the candidate or committee has not received contributions or made disbursements exceeding \$750 in the calendar year. The certification shall be submitted to the filing officer no later than seven days after the general or special election. The secretary of state shall prepare blanks for this certification. An officer who issues a certificate of election to a candidate who has not certified that all reports required by section 211A.02 have been filed is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Subd. 2. **Notice of failure to file.** If a candidate or committee fails to file a report on the date it is due, the filing officer shall immediately notify the county attorney of the county where the candidate resides or where the committee headquarters is located. The county attorney shall then immediately notify the candidate or committee of the failure to file. If a report is not filed within ten days after the notification is mailed, the county attorney shall proceed under section 211A.08.

History: 1988 c 578 art 2 s 5; 1989 c 291 art 1 s 31

211A.06 FAILURE TO KEEP ACCOUNT; PENALTY.

A treasurer or other individual who receives money for a committee is guilty of a misdemeanor if the individual:

- (1) fails to keep a correct account as required by law;
- (2) mutilates, defaces, or destroys an account record; or
- (3) in the case of a committee, refuses upon request to provide financial information to a candidate; and
- (4) does any of these things with the intent to conceal receipts or disbursements, the purpose of receipts or disbursements, or the existence or amount of an unpaid debt or the identity of the person to whom it is owed.

History: 1988 c 578 art 2 s 6

211A.07 BILLS WHEN RENDERED AND PAID.

A person who has a bill, charge, or claim against a candidate's committee shall render it in writing to the committee within 60 days after the material or service is provided. A bill, charge, or claim that is not presented within 60 days after the material or service is provided must not be paid.

History: 1988 c 578 art 2 s 7

211A.08 COUNTY ATTORNEY INQUIRY.

Subdivision 1. **Duties of county attorney.** A county attorney who is notified of an alleged violation of this chapter shall promptly investigate. If there is probable cause to institute a prosecution, the county attorney shall proceed by complaint or present the charge with whatever evidence has been found to the grand jury. A county attorney who refuses or intentionally fails to faithfully perform this or any other duty imposed by this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall forfeit office. The county attorney, under penalty of forfeiture of office, shall prosecute all violations of this chapter except for a violation of this section; if, however, a complainant desires to withdraw a complaint under this chapter, the county attorney is not required to proceed with prosecution.

Subd. 2. **Associate counsel.** Anyone except the person under investigation or the person's agent may employ an attorney to assist the county attorney in the investigation and prosecution of a violation of this chapter. The county attorney and the court shall recognize the attorney as associate counsel for the proceeding. A prosecution, action, or proceeding may not be dismissed without notice to the associate counsel. If the associate counsel objects to the dismissal, the county attorney's reasons for dismissal and the associate counsel's objections must be filed with the court and heard within the time period the court requires.

History: 1986 c 444; 1988 c 578 art 2 s 8

211A.09 FORFEITURE OF NOMINATION OR OFFICE.

Subdivision 1. **Forfeiture required.** Except as provided in subdivision 2, if a candidate is convicted of violating a provision of this chapter or if an offense was committed by another individual with the knowledge, consent, or connivance of the candidate, the court, after entering the adjudication of guilty, shall enter a supplemental judgment declaring that the candidate has forfeited the nomination or office. If the court enters

the supplemental judgment, it shall transmit to the filing officer a transcript of the supplemental judgment, the nomination or office becomes vacant, and the vacancy must be filled as provided by law.

Subd. 2. Circumstances where nomination or office not forfeited. In a trial for a violation of this chapter, the candidate's nomination or election is not void if the court finds that:

(1) an offense, though committed by the candidate or with the candidate's knowledge, consent, or connivance, was trivial; or

(2) an act or omission of a candidate arose from accidental miscalculation or other reasonable cause, but in any case not from a want of good faith, and that it would be unjust for the candidate to forfeit the nomination or election.

Neither of these findings is a defense to a conviction under this chapter.

History: 1988 c 578 art 2 s 9

211A.10 DISQUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS NOT TO HOLD VARIOUS POSITIONS.

A candidate whose election to office has been set aside for a violation of this chapter may not be appointed, during the period fixed by law as the term of the office, to fill a vacancy that may occur in the office. A candidate or other individual who is convicted of a violation of this chapter may not be appointed, during the period fixed by law as the term of the office with respect to which the election was held and the offense was committed, to fill a vacancy in the office. An appointment to an office made contrary to this section is void.

A candidate or other individual who is convicted of a violation of this chapter is not qualified, during the period fixed by law as the term of the office with respect to which the election was held and the offense was committed, to fill a vacancy in an office for which the legislature may establish qualifications under article XII, section 3, of the Minnesota Constitution.

History: 1988 c 578 art 2 s 10

211A.11 PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS.

A violation of this chapter for which no other penalty is provided is a misdemeanor.

History: 1988 c 578 art 2 s 11