

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 printed name, address, telephone number, signature, and e-mail address, if available, of the person responsible for filing the report;
- (3) the total cash on hand designated to be used for political purposes;
- (4) the total amount of contributions and disbursements for the period from the last previous report to five days before the current report is due;
- (5) the amount, date, and purpose for each disbursement; and
- (6) the name, address, and employer, or occupation if self-employed, of any individual or committee that during the year has made one or more contributions that in the aggregate exceed \$100, and the amount and date of each contribution. The filing officer must restrict public access to the address of any individual who has made a contribution that exceeds \$100 and who has filed with the filing officer a written statement signed by the individual that withholding the individual's address from the financial report is required for the safety of the individual or the individual's family.

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. A candidate or committee whose report is published on the Federal Election Commission website has complied with the filing requirements of this section.

Subd. 5. **Electronic reporting.** The reports required by this section may be filed electronically, subject to the approval of the filing officer.

Subd. 6. **Online accessibility; reports.** (a) The filing officer of a local government shall make all reports required to be filed with the local government under this section available on the local government's website,

if the local government maintains a website. The filing officer must post the reports on the local government's website as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after receipt of the report. The local government must make the reports available on the local government's website for four years from the date the report was posted to the website.

(b) The filing officer shall provide the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board with the link to the section of the website where reports are made available pursuant to paragraph (a). The Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board shall publish on its website each link that a filing officer provides pursuant to this paragraph.

(c) This subdivision does not apply to a statutory or home rule charter city or town if the statutory or home rule charter city or town has fewer than 400 registered voters as of January 1 of the year in which the election is to be held.

History: 1988 c 578 art 2 s 2; 1989 c 291 art 1 s 30; 1Sp2001 c 10 art 18 s 39; 2004 c 293 art 2 s 43; 2006 c 242 s 38; 2008 c 244 art 1 s 22; 2010 c 327 s 25; 2014 c 265 s 1; 2014 c 309 s 24

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. [Repealed, 1992 c 513 art 3 s 79]

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 or a certification required by this section 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 or a certification required by this section 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 has filed an initial report, but fails to file a subsequent report on the date it is due, the filing officer shall 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 filing officer shall file a complaint under section 211B.32.

History: 1988 c 578 art 2 s 5; 1989 c 291 art 1 s 31; 2004 c 277 s 3; 2008 c 244 art 1 s 23; 2010 c 327 s 26

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 PROSECUTION.

Subdivision 1. [Repealed, 2004 c 277 s 13]

Subd. 2. [Repealed, 2004 c 277 s 13]

Subd. 3. **County attorney authority.** A county attorney may prosecute any violation of this chapter.

History: 1986 c 444; 1988 c 578 art 2 s 8; 2004 c 277 s 4

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*

211A.12 CONTRIBUTION LIMITS.

A candidate or a candidate's committee may not accept aggregate contributions made or delivered by an individual or committee in excess of \$600 in an election year for the office sought and \$250 in other years; except that a candidate or a candidate's committee for an office whose territory has a population over 100,000 may not accept aggregate contributions made or delivered by an individual or committee in excess of \$1,000 in an election year for the office sought and \$250 in other years.

The following deliveries are not subject to the bundling limitation in this section:

(1) delivery of contributions collected by a member of the candidate's committee, such as a block worker or a volunteer who hosts a fund-raising event, to the committee's treasurer; and

(2) a delivery made by an individual on behalf of the individual's spouse.

Notwithstanding sections 211A.02, subdivision 3, and 410.21, this section supersedes any home rule charter.

History: *1993 c 318 art 2 s 46; 1997 c 224 s 1; 2014 c 265 s 2*

211A.13 PROHIBITED TRANSFERS.

A candidate for political subdivision office must not accept contributions from the principal campaign committee of a candidate as defined in section 10A.01, subdivision 34. A candidate for political subdivision

office must not make contributions to a principal campaign committee, unless the contribution is made from the personal funds of the candidate for political subdivision office.

History: *1993 c 318 art 2 s 47; 2003 c 2 art 1 s 21*

211A.14 CONTRIBUTIONS AND SOLICITATIONS DURING LEGISLATIVE SESSION.

A legislator or state constitutional officer who is a candidate for a county, city, or town office, the candidate's principal campaign committee, and any other political committee with the candidate's name or title may not solicit or accept a contribution from a political fund or registered lobbyist during a regular session of the legislature.

History: *1997 c 224 s 2*