
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 945

AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF CAMPAIGN REPORTS WITH THE STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION.

SUMMARY:

Beginning April 1, 2012, this bill lowers, from \$250,000 to \$4,500, the threshold at which statewide office candidate committees must file periodic campaign finance statements electronically with the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC). It (1) extends the requirement to specified exploratory committees, candidate committees, party committees, political committees (known as PACs), and individuals making independent expenditures and (2) expands it to include any financial disclosure statement these committees or individuals must file to comply with campaign finance law or the Citizens' Election Program (CEP).

The bill requires these individuals and committees to file the reports online using eCRIS (i.e., the SEEC's online filing system) or a SEEC-prescribed program.

The bill makes technical and conforming changes, primarily to reflect the new online filing system, eCRIS.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

COVERED COMMITTEES AND INDIVIDUALS

Under current law, statewide office candidate committees that raise or spend \$250,000 or more during an election campaign must file their periodic campaign finance statements electronically with the SEEC. There is no electronic filing requirement for other committees (candidate, party, PAC) or individuals.

The bill lowers this threshold to \$4,500 and extends the electronic

filing requirement to (1) exploratory committees for statewide office candidates that raise or spend more than the threshold amount and (2) exploratory and candidate committees for legislative candidates and judge of probate candidates that raise or spend more than the threshold amount.

The bill also extends the electronic filing requirement to:

state central, legislative caucus, and legislative leadership committees;

town committees and PACs that register with the SEEC and raise or spend \$5,000 or more in the current calendar year or raised or spent \$5,000 or more in the last regular election; and

individuals or committees that make or are obligated to make independent expenditures exceeding \$1,000 in the aggregate and must therefore file a report with the SEEC.

Under the bill, as under current law, candidate committees that do not reach the threshold in contributions or expenditures may file online. Similarly, town committees and PACs that do not have a \$5,000 balance may file online.

COVERED FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

For covered committees and individuals, the bill expands the electronic filing requirement to include any financial disclosure statement they must file to comply with campaign finance law or the CEP. In addition to periodic campaign finance statements, these include the cumulative itemized accounting that accompanies a CEP grant application, supplemental statements, excess expenditure reports, amended filings, and termination reports, among others.

RESUBMITTING REPORTS

Current law requires statewide office candidate committees that reach the threshold to electronically resubmit any previously filed statements that were not in electronic format. The bill extends this requirement to candidate committees for legislative candidates and

candidates for judge of probate.

eCRIS

The bill eliminates references to a SEEC-created “software” program, replacing them with references to a “web-based” program. Since the law requires committee treasurers to submit all electronic filings online, the bill eliminates an obsolete provision allowing mandatory electronic filings to be made using alternative media forms (e.g., disks or tapes).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 14 Nay 0 (03/30/2011)