

## Questions for State Elections Enforcement Commission Nominee

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### State Elections Enforcement Commission ([CGS §§ 9-7a to 9-7c](#))

- The State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) is responsible for administering and enforcing the state's public financing program, the Citizens' Election Program (CEP). It also investigates possible violations of election laws, inspects campaign finance records and reports, refers evidence of violations to the chief state's attorney or the attorney general, levies civil penalties for elections violations, issues advisory opinions, and makes recommendations to the General Assembly concerning revisions to the state's election laws.
- SEEC consists of five members who serve three-year, staggered terms. The governor and the four legislative leaders each appoint one member. No more than two may belong to the same political party, and at least one must not be affiliated with any political party. Both houses of the General Assembly confirm. Members cannot serve more than two consecutive terms.
- The commission elects one of its members to serve as chairperson and another to serve as vice-chairperson. It can employ individuals necessary to perform its functions.

### Questions

1. As a commissioner, what role do you typically play in SEEC decisions about alleged election law violations? Is this the appropriate role? Should it be expanded or reduced?
2. What emerging public policy issues are facing state elections enforcement agencies generally and SEEC specifically?
3. What are the commission's top legislative priorities for the 2019 session and why?

4. What do you consider to be the major strengths and weaknesses of Connecticut's campaign finance laws? How should the state address any weaknesses?
5. In addition to campaign finance, SEEC has jurisdiction over Connecticut election laws related to voter registration, absentee voting, voting procedures, and election canvass and recount procedures. Do you believe these laws adequately prevent and deter voter fraud?
6. SEEC and the Office of the Secretary of the State both play a role in election administration. Are there opportunities for the agencies to collaborate? Do you believe election-related duties and responsibilities are appropriately divided between the agencies? Should either agency's authority be expanded or narrowed? Please explain.
7. What impact has the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision had on Connecticut elections?
8. About how many investigations does SEEC conduct annually? For what types of allegations? About how many result in a sanction?
9. SEEC is authorized to levy a civil penalty of up to \$2,000 per offense or twice the amount of any improper payment or contribution, whichever is greater, for a campaign finance violation. Do you believe the maximum fine should be changed? Do you think the commission's authority to enforce these laws is strong enough?
10. The legislature is currently considering two bills, [SB 1042](#) and [sHB 7329](#), which modify the current one-year deadline under which SEEC generally must either issue a final opinion or dismiss a complaint. The bills instead require SEEC to dismiss any such complaint for which it does not find reason to believe, within one year after receipt, that a violation occurred. Please explain this change and why the commission is advocating for it.
11. [PA 17-2](#), JSS, as amended by [PA 17-4](#), JSS, established a four-step grant reduction schedule under which candidate committees receive reduced CEP grants the closer to the election that they submit their application. How did this new schedule work during the 2018 election cycle? Were there benefits or drawbacks?
12. The legislature is currently considering two bills, [sHB 5823](#) and [sHB 7210](#) that require campaign consultants to register with SEEC under certain conditions. Do you support this policy? Please explain.
13. In Declaratory Ruling [2019-02](#), the commission held that childcare costs are not a permissible expense for candidates that have been approved for a CEP grant. The commission indicated that a change in legislation or regulation would be needed to alter this outcome. Would SEEC support such a change?

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