
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 262

AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE FILINGS.

SUMMARY

This bill makes the following changes in the campaign finance laws:

1. requires various entities to file certain campaign financial disclosure statements with the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) rather than the town clerk;
2. requires that municipal campaign financial disclosure statements and all registration statements be filed with SEEC through a web-based program (i.e., eCRIS); and
3. modifies an existing exemption for refiling registration statements for certain political committees to conform to these changes and current practice.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2026

MUNICIPAL FILINGS

The bill requires the following entities to file financial disclosure statements or exemption certifications with SEEC rather than with the town clerk:

1. exploratory, candidate, and political state committees for municipal candidates;
2. political committees for referendum questions to be voted on by a single municipality; and
3. a slate of candidates in a primary election for justice of the peace.

If a slate of candidates for the office of justice of the peace unanimously agrees to be financed solely by a town committee, the bill requires the committee to file a consent statement with SEEC instead of the town clerk. By law, unchanged by the bill, if a consent statement is filed, the slate is exempt from political committee requirements (CGS § 9-605).

Additionally, since these statements will no longer be filed with the town clerks, the bill makes conforming changes and replaces related requirements that SEEC prepare, print, and provide campaign financial disclosure forms to the town clerks and that unsalaried town clerks receive 10 cents from the town for each filing. Instead, SEEC must make the forms available on the commission's website. SEEC must also print and distribute these forms to treasurers who have received a waiver to file electronically.

The bill also removes obsolete language referencing individual lobbyists filing with SEEC. In practice, lobbyists register with the Office of State Ethics (CGS § 1-94).

ELECTRONIC FILING

The bill also requires that the following statements be filed via a web-based program created by SEEC (i.e., eCRIS): (1) municipal campaign financial disclosure statements for candidate and exploratory committees, (2) all certificates of exemptions from registration, and (3) all registration statements.

Existing law already requires the use of eCRIS for certain entities: (1) treasurers for candidates and committees for certain state offices and (2) committees required to file with the commission. Additionally, under current law, registration statements must be filed electronically or manually with the proper authority (i.e., SEEC or the town clerk). The law also allows SEEC to waive the requirement to file electronically for good cause.

REGISTRATION EXEMPTION

The bill also modifies an existing exemption to the requirement that

certain political committees reregister with SEEC. Under current law, political committees required to file with SEEC must file a registration statement (1) within 10 days after organization and (2) by November 15 of each even-numbered year. The bill narrows this exemption to political committees established solely for (1) aiding or promoting candidates for municipal office or (2) the success or defeat of a referendum question. (These committees are generally not subject to the refiling requirement as they rarely last longer than one election.)

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 14 Nay 5 (03/15/2024)