


TOWN OF RANSOM CANYON

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November 22, 2023

TO: Candidates

FROM: Elena Quintanilla, City Administrator/City Secretary 

SUBJECT: Election Information for General City Election May 4, 2024

The attached material contains critical information you will need to run for office. Please refer to the Table of Contents to find what you need.

Election law, and especially campaign finance law, is complex; therefore a candidate should utilize the resources offered by the Secretary of State in their website, www.sos.state.tx.us/elections. Other resources would be the Texas Ethics Commission website, www.ethics.state.tx.us. The Ransom Canyon City Secretary cannot advise you or groups who support or oppose candidates on matters of election or campaign finance law. The City Attorney provides legal services to the City as a municipal entity and the City must maintain neutrality in the electoral process. The City Secretary can advise candidates when reports are due. However, the duty of the office is limited to accepting and filing the various applications, affidavits, and statements. Staff will not judge or comment upon the timeliness or sufficiency of reports filed. All of these documents are public records and are open to inspection by any person

The first day to apply for a place on the City General Election Ballot is **January 17, 2024**. The last day for filing an application for a place on the ballot is **February 16, 2024** by 5:00 p.m.

Drawing for a position on the ballot will be held at **9:00 a.m. Tuesday, February 20, 2024** in City Hall, 24 Lee Kitchens Drive.

GENERAL ELECTION CALENDAR

General Election – May 4, 2024

Town of Ransom Canyon

- 1/16/24** Due date for filing campaign finance report for all candidates who had a campaign treasurer on file as of December 31, 2023
- 1/17/24** First Day to File for a Place on the Ballot
- 2/16/24** Last Day to File for a Place on the Ballot; 5:00 p.m.
- 2/20/24** Drawing for Position on the Ballot; 9:00 a.m.
- 2/20/24** Deadline for a Write-in Candidate to Declare Candidacy; 5:00 p.m.
- 2/23/24** Last day for a Candidate to Withdraw from the Election; 5:00 p.m.
- 4/04/24** Due Date for Filing First Report (30th Day Report) of Campaign Contributions and Expenditures by Opposed Candidates by 5:00 p.m. Beginning Date of Period Cover is: 1) January 1, 2024, or 2) the Date of Campaign Treasurer Appointment or 3) the Day After the Date the Last Report Ended. Ending Date of Period Covered is March 24, 2024.
- 4/22/24** First day of Early Voting by Personal Appearance
- 4/26/24** Due Date for Filing Second Report of Campaign Contributions and Expenditures by 5:00 p.m. Beginning Date of Period Covered is 1) March 26, 2024; or 2) the Date of Campaign Treasurer Appointment, or 3) The Day After the Date the Last Report Ended, Whichever is Applicable. Ending Date of Period Covered is April 24, 2024.
- 4/30/24** Last Day of Early Voting by Personal Appearance
- 5/04/24** Election Day Polls Open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- 5/14/24** Canvassing of Election and Swearing in Ceremony (Note: This is a tentative date. The last day to canvass is May 15, 2024.
- 7/15/24** Last Day for Timely Filing of Semi-Annual Report of Contributions.

ELIGIBILITY

REQUIREMENTS TO RUN FOR OFFICE

To run for office in a general law city in Texas, you must, among other requirements:

- be a citizen of the United States;
- be at least 18 years old on the date of the election; and
- have lived in the State of Texas for at least 12 consecutive months prior to the filing date for the election, and in your city or ward for at least 6 months prior to the filing date for the election.

Certain offices and certain city types have additional requirements in state law, so you should be sure to check with both the city and the Texas Secretary of State's office to ensure that you are eligible. A home rule city may set different requirements in its charter. Please refer to Section 141.001 "Eligibility Requirements for Public Office," of the Texas Election Code on the next page.

FILING FOR A PLACE ON THE BALLOT

To run for city office, you must file an application with the city clerk or secretary. The application includes information required by the Texas Election Code and must be filed according to deadlines set by that code. A candidate may either file for a place on the ballot or as a write-in candidate, but an application must be filed in either case can inform you of the rules and deadlines.

TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION CAMPAIGN FINANCE FILINGS

State law requires the filing of various forms by a candidate for city office. All candidates for city offices must file an "Appointment of a Campaign Treasurer by a Candidate" form with the city secretary before beginning their campaigns. Candidates who do not intend to accept more than \$500 in political contributions or make more than \$500 in political expenditures may file a modified reporting declaration and operate under modified reporting. Under modified reporting, the candidate is not required to file any further forms beyond the final report, which is filed at the end of the campaign. Semiannual reports may still be required in some cases.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Candidates who intend to accept more than \$1010 in political contributions or make more than \$1010 in political expenditures, or who exceed that amount even after filing for modified reporting, must file under regular reporting requirements. Reports due under these requirements must be submitted by January 15 and July 15 of each year. The reports filed on these dates are known as semiannual reports. An opposed candidate in an upcoming city election who is using regular reporting must file reports of contributions and expenditures 30 days and 8 days before the election. A candidate in a runoff must file a report 8 days before the runoff election. Candidates filing under regular reporting are also required to file a final report at the end of the campaign. Detailed information on filing is available on the Texas Ethics Commission's Web site at www.ethics.state.tx.us.

APPLICATION

APPLICATION

- First day to apply for a place on the ballot.....1/17/24
- Last day to apply for a place on the ballot.....2/16/24
- Drawing for a position on the ballot.....2/20/24

City Hall

24 Lee Kitchens Drive

9:00 a.m.

If a candidate wishes to be notified (of the drawing) by mail on receipt of the candidate's written request accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope, the authority conducting the drawing shall mail written notice of the date, hour, and place of the drawing to the candidate. The same notification process applies to email.

Note: **A copy of the application is included within this packet. For your use, a separate hard copy is provided.**

APPLICATION

APPLICATION FOR A PLACE ON THE BALLOT FOR A GENERAL ELECTION FOR A CITY, SCHOOL DISTRICT OR OTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISION

ALL INFORMATION IS REQUIRED TO BE PROVIDED UNLESS INDICATED AS OPTIONAL¹ Failure to provide required information may result in rejection of application.

APPLICATION FOR A PLACE ON THE _____ GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT					
TO: City Secretary/Secretary of Board _____ (name of election)					
I request that my name be placed on the above-named official ballot as a candidate for the office indicated below.					
OFFICE SOUGHT (Include any place number or other distinguishing number, if any.)				INDICATE TERM <input type="checkbox"/> FULL <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPIRED	
FULL NAME (First, Middle, Last)			PRINT NAME AS YOU WANT IT TO APPEAR ON THE BALLOT*		
PERMANENT RESIDENCE ADDRESS (Do not include a P.O. Box or Rural Route. If you do not have a residence address, describe location of residence.)			PUBLIC MAILING ADDRESS (Optional) (Address for which you receive campaign related correspondence, if available.)		
CITY	STATE	ZIP	CITY	STATE	ZIP
PUBLIC EMAIL ADDRESS (Optional) (Address for which you receive campaign related emails, if available.)		OCCUPATION (Do not leave blank)	DATE OF BIRTH / /	VOTER REGISTRATION VOID NUMBER² (Optional)	
TELEPHONE CONTACT INFORMATION (Optional) Home: _____ Office: _____ Cell: _____					
FELONY CONVICTION STATUS (You MUST check one)		LENGTH OF CONTINUOUS RESIDENCE AS OF DATE THIS APPLICATION WAS SWORN			
<input type="checkbox"/> I have not been finally convicted of a felony.		IN THE STATE OF TEXAS		IN TERRITORY/DISTRICT/PRECINCT FROM WHICH THE OFFICE SOUGHT IS ELECTED	
<input type="checkbox"/> I have been finally convicted of a felony, but I have been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disabilities of that felony conviction and I have provided proof of this fact with the submission of this application. ³		_____ year(s) _____ month(s)		_____ year(s) _____ month(s)	
*If using a nickname as part of your name to appear on the ballot, you are also signing and swearing to the following statements: I further swear that my nickname does not constitute a slogan or contain a title, nor does it indicate a political, economic, social, or religious view or affiliation. I have been commonly known by this nickname for at least three years prior to this election. Please review sections 52.031, 52.032 and 52.033 of the Texas Election Code regarding the rules for how names may be listed on the official ballot.					
Before me, the undersigned authority, on this day personally appeared (name of candidate) _____, who being by me here and now duly sworn, upon oath says: "I, (name of candidate) _____, of _____ County, Texas, being a candidate for the office of _____, swear that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of the State of Texas. I am a citizen of the United States eligible to hold such office under the constitution and laws of this state. I have not been determined by a final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be totally mentally incapacitated or partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote. I am aware of the nepotism law, Chapter 573, Government Code. I am aware that I must disclose any prior felony conviction, and if so convicted, must provide proof that I have been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disabilities of any such final felony conviction. I am aware that knowingly providing false information on the application regarding my possible felony conviction status constitutes a Class B misdemeanor. I further swear that the foregoing statements included in my application are in all things true and correct."					
X _____ SIGNATURE OF CANDIDATE					
Sworn to and subscribed before me this the _____ day of _____, _____, by _____ (name of candidate)					
Signature of Officer Authorized to Administer Oath ⁴			Printed Name of Officer Authorized to Administer Oath		
Title of Officer Authorized to Administer Oath			Notarial or Official Seal		
TO BE COMPLETED BY FILING OFFICER: THIS APPLICATION IS ACCOMPANIED BY THE REQUIRED FILING FEE (If Applicable) PAID BY: <input type="checkbox"/> CASH <input type="checkbox"/> CHECK <input type="checkbox"/> MONEY ORDER <input type="checkbox"/> CASHIERS CHECK OR <input type="checkbox"/> PETITION IN LIEU OF A FILING FEE. This document and \$_____ filing fee or a nominating petition of _____ pages received. <input type="checkbox"/> Voter Registration Status Verified					
_____/_____/_____ Date Received		_____/_____/_____ Date Accepted		(See Section 1.007) _____ Signature of Filing Officer or Designee	

INSTRUCTIONS

An application for a place on the general election for a city, school district or other political subdivision, may not be filed earlier than 30 days before the deadline prescribed by this code for filing the application. An application filed before that day is void. All fields of the application **must** be completed unless specifically marked optional.

For an election to be held on a uniform election date, the day of the filing deadline is the 78th day before Election Day.

If you have questions about the application, please contact the Secretary of State's Elections Division at 800-252-8683.

NEPOTISM LAW

The candidate must sign this statement indicating his awareness of the nepotism law. When a candidate signs the application, it is an acknowledgment that the candidate is aware of the nepotism law. The nepotism prohibitions of chapter 573, Government Code, are summarized below:

No officer may appoint, or vote for or confirm the appointment or employment of any person related within the second degree by affinity (marriage) or the third degree by consanguinity (blood) to the officer, or to any other member of the governing body or court on which the officer serves when the compensation of that person is to be paid out of public funds or fees of office. However, nothing in the law prevents the appointment, voting for, or confirmation of anyone who has been continuously employed in the office or employment for the following period prior to the election or appointment of the officer or member related to the employee in the prohibited degree: six months, if the officer or member is elected at an election other than the general election for state and county officers.

No candidate may take action to influence an employee of the office to which the candidate is seeking election or an employee or officer of the governmental body to which the candidate is seeking election regarding the appointment or employment of a person related to the candidate in a prohibited degree as noted above. This prohibition does not apply to a candidate's actions with respect to a bona fide class or category of employees or prospective employees.

FOOTNOTES

¹An application for a place on the ballot, including any accompanying petition, is public information immediately on its filing. (Section 141.035, Texas Election Code)

²Inclusion of a candidate's VUID is optional. However, many candidates are required to be registered voters in the territory from which the office is elected at the time of the filing deadline. Please visit the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's website for additional information. <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/laws/hb484-faq.shtml>

³Proof of release from the resulting disabilities of a felony conviction would include proof of judicial clemency under Texas Code of Criminal Procedure 42A.701, proof of executive pardon under Texas Code of Criminal Procedure 48.01, or proof of a restoration of rights under Texas Code of Criminal Procedure 48.05. (Texas Attorney General Opinion KP-0251)

One of the following documents must be submitted with this application.

Judicial Clemency under Texas Code of Criminal Procedure 42A.701

Executive Pardon under Texas Code of Criminal Procedure 48.01

Restoration of Rights under Texas Code of Criminal Procedure 48.05

⁴All oaths, affidavits, or affirmations made within this State may be administered and a certificate of the fact given by a judge, clerk, or commissioner of any court of record, a notary public, a justice of the peace, city secretary (for a city office), and the Secretary of State of Texas. See Chapter 602 of the Texas Government Code for the complete list of persons authorized to administer oaths.

**SOLICITUD DE INSCRIPCIÓN PARA UN LUGAR EN LA BOLETA DE UNA ELECCIÓN GENERAL
PARA UNA CIUDAD, DISTRITO ESCOLAR U OTRA SUBDIVISIÓN POLÍTICA**

TODA LA INFORMACIÓN ES REQUERIDA A MENOS QUE SE INDIQUE COMO OPCIONAL¹ El hecho de no proporcionar la información requerida puede resultar en el rechazo de la solicitud

SOLICITUD DE INSCRIPCIÓN PARA UN LUGAR EN LA BOLETA DE UNA ELECCIÓN GENERAL DE _____ Para: Secretario(a) de la Ciudad/ Secretario(a) del Consejo (nombre de la elección) Solicito que mi nombre se incluya en la boleta oficial mencionada anteriormente como candidato(a) al cargo indicado a continuación.					
CARGO SOLICITADO (Incluya cualquier número de cargo u otro número distintivo, si lo hay.)			INDIQUE TÉRMINO <input type="checkbox"/> TÉRMINO COMPLETO <input type="checkbox"/> TÉRMINO INCOMPLETO		
NOMBRE COMPLETO (Primer Nombre, Segundo Nombre, Apellido)			ESCRIBA SU NOMBRE COMO DESEA QUE APAREZCA EN LA BOLETA*		
DIRECCIÓN DE RESIDENCIA PERMANENTE (No incluya un apartado postal o una ruta rural. Si usted no tiene una dirección de residencia, describa la ubicación de la residencia.)			DIRECCIÓN DE CORREO PÚBLICO (Opcional) (Dirección en la que recibe la correspondencia relacionada con la campaña, si está disponible.)		
CIUDAD	ESTADO	CÓDIGO POSTAL	CIUDAD	ESTADO	CÓDIGO POSTAL
DIRECCIÓN DE CORREO ELECTRÓNICO PÚBLICO (Opcional) (Dirección donde recibe correo electrónico relacionado con la campaña, si está disponible.)		OCUPACIÓN (No deje este espacio en blanco)	FECHA DE NACIMIENTO / /	VUID – NÚMERO ÚNICO DE IDENTIFICACIÓN DE VOTANTE² (Opcional)	
INFORMACIÓN DE CONTACTO TELEFÓNICO (Opcional) Hogar: Trabajo: Celular:					
ESTADO DE CONDENA POR DELITO GRAVE (DEBE marcar una)			DURACIÓN DE RESIDENCIA CONTINUA A PARTIR DE LA FECHA EN QUE ESTA SOLICITUD FUE JURADA		
<input type="checkbox"/> No he sido finalmente condenado por un delito grave. <input type="checkbox"/> He sido finalmente condenado por un delito grave, pero he sido indultado o liberado de otro modo de las discapacidades resultantes de esa condena por delito grave y he proporcionado prueba de este hecho con la presentación de esta solicitud. ³			EN EL ESTADO DE TEXAS ____ año(s) ____ mes(es)		EN EL TERRITORIO/DISTRITO/PRECINTO DEL CUAL SE ELIGE EL CARGO BUSCADO ____ año(s) ____ mes(es)
*Si usa un apodo como parte de su nombre para aparecer en la boleta, también está firmando y jurando las siguientes declaraciones: Juro además que mi apodo no constituye un lema ni contiene un título, ni indica un punto de vista o afiliación política, económica, social o religiosa. He sido comúnmente conocido por este apodo durante al menos tres años antes de esta elección. Por favor, revise las secciones 52.031, 52.032 y 52.033 del Código Electoral de Texas con respecto a las reglas sobre cómo se pueden incluir los nombres en la boleta oficial.					
Ante mí, la autoridad abajo firmante, en este día apareció personalmente (nombre del candidato) _____, quien estando a mi lado aquí y ahora debidamente juramentado, bajo juramento dice: "Yo, (nombre del candidato) _____, del condado de _____, Texas, siendo candidato para el cargo de _____, juro que apoyaré y defenderé la Constitución y las leyes de los Estados Unidos y del Estado de Texas. Soy un ciudadano de los Estados Unidos elegible para ocupar dicho cargo según la Constitución y las leyes de este estado. No se me ha determinado por un fallo final de una corte que ejerce la jurisdicción testamentaria que esté totalmente incapacitado mentalmente o parcialmente incapacitado sin derecho a voto. Soy consciente de la ley de nepotismo según el Capítulo 573 del Código de Gobierno. Soy consciente de que debo divulgar cualquier condena previa de un delito grave y, si he sido condenado, debo proporcionar prueba de que he sido indultado o liberado de otro modo de las discapacidades resultantes de dicha condena final por delito grave. Soy consciente de que proporcionar a sabiendas información falsa en la solicitud con respecto a mi posible estado de condena por delito grave constituye un delito menor de Clase B. Juro además que las declaraciones anteriores incluidas en mi solicitud son, en todos los aspectos, verdaderas y correctas."					
X _____ FIRMA DEL CANDIDATO					
Jurado y suscrito ante mí este día _____ de _____ del _____ por _____ (día) (mes) (año) (nombre de candidato)					
Firma del oficial autorizado para administrar el juramento ⁴			Nombre del oficial autorizado para administrar juramentos en letra de molde Notarial o sello oficial		
Título del oficial autorizado para administrar el juramento					
TO BE COMPLETED BY FILING OFFICER: THIS APPLICATION IS ACCOMPANIED BY THE REQUIRED FILING FEE (If Applicable) PAID BY: <input type="checkbox"/> CASH <input type="checkbox"/> CHECK <input type="checkbox"/> MONEY ORDER <input type="checkbox"/> CASHIERS CHECK OR <input type="checkbox"/> PETITION IN LIEU OF A FILING FEE.					
This document and \$_____ filing fee or a nominating petition of _____ pages received. <input type="checkbox"/> Voter Registration Status Verified					
____/____/____ Date Received		____/____/____ Date Accepted		(See Section 1.007) _____ Signature of Filing Officer or Designee	

INSTRUCCIONES

Una solicitud para un lugar en la elección general para una ciudad, distrito escolar u otra subdivisión política, no puede ser presentada antes de los 30 días antes de la fecha límite prescrita por este código para presentar la solicitud. Una solicitud presentada antes de ese día es nula. Todos los campos de la solicitud **deben** completarse a menos que estén específicamente marcados como opcional.

Para una elección que se lleve a cabo en una fecha de elección uniforme, el día de la fecha límite de presentación es el 78º día antes del día de la elección.

Si tiene preguntas sobre la solicitud, por favor póngase en contacto con la División de Elecciones del Secretario de Estado llamando al 800-252-8683.

LEY DE NEPOTISMO

El candidato debe firmar esta declaración indicando su conocimiento de la ley del nepotismo. Cuando un candidato firma la solicitud, es un reconocimiento de que el candidato conoce la ley del nepotismo. Las prohibiciones de nepotismo del capítulo 573, Código de Gobierno, se resumen a continuación:

Ningún funcionario puede nombrar, votar o confirmar el nombramiento o empleo de cualquier persona emparentada dentro del segundo grado por afinidad (matrimonio) o del tercer grado por consanguinidad (sangre) con sí mismo, o con cualquier otro miembro del órgano de gobierno o corte en el que se desempeña cuando la compensación de esa persona debe pagarse con fondos públicos o honorarios del cargo. Sin embargo, nada en la ley impide el nombramiento, la votación o la confirmación de cualquier persona que haya estado empleada continuamente en la oficina o el empleo durante el período siguiente antes de la elección o el nombramiento del funcionario o miembro emparentado con el empleado en el grado prohibido: seis meses, si el funcionario o miembro es elegido en una elección que no sea la elección general para funcionarios estatales y del condado.

Ningún candidato puede tomar medidas para influir en un empleado del cargo al que aspira a ser elegido o en un empleado o funcionario del organismo gubernamental al que aspira a ser elegido en relación con el nombramiento o el empleo de una persona emparentada con el candidato en un grado prohibido, tal como se ha indicado anteriormente. Esta prohibición no se aplica a las acciones de un candidato con respecto a una clase o categoría de buena fe de empleados o empleados prospectos.

NOTAS

¹Una solicitud para un lugar en la boleta electoral, incluida cualquier petición que la acompañe, es información pública inmediatamente después de su presentación. (Sección 141.035, Código Electoral de Texas)

²La inclusión del número único de identificación de votante (VUID, por sus siglas en Inglés) es opcional. Sin embargo, a muchos candidatos se les exige que estén registrados como votantes en el territorio desde el cual se elige el cargo en el momento de la fecha límite de presentación. Por favor, visite el sitio web de la División de Elecciones de la Secretaría de Estado para obtener información adicional. <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/laws/hb484-faq.shtml>

³La prueba de liberación de las discapacidades resultantes de una condena por un delito grave incluiría prueba de clemencia judicial según el Código de Procedimiento Penal de Texas 42A.701, prueba de indulto ejecutivo según el Código de Procedimiento Penal de Texas 48.01, o prueba de una restauración de derechos según el Código de Procedimiento Penal de Texas 48.05. (Opinión de Fiscal General de Texas KP-0251)

Se debe enviar uno de los siguientes documentos con esta solicitud:

Clemencia judicial según el Código de Procedimiento Penal de Texas 42A.701

Prueba de indulto ejecutivo según el Código de Procedimiento Penal de Texas 48.01

Prueba de una restauración de derechos según el Código de Procedimiento Penal de Texas 48.05

⁴Todos los juramentos, declaraciones juradas o afirmaciones hechas dentro de este estado pueden ser administrados y un certificado del hecho dado por un juez, secretario(a) o comisionado de cualquier corte de registro, un notario público, un juez de paz, secretario municipal (para una oficina de la ciudad) y el Secretario de Estado de Texas. Consulte el Capítulo 602 del Código del Gobierno de Texas para obtener la lista completa de personas autorizadas a administrar juramentos.

NEPOTISM

Texas Nepotism Laws Made Easy



2016 Editor

Zindia Thomas
Assistant General Counsel
Texas Municipal League
www.tml.org

Updated July 2016

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Texas Nepotism Laws Made Easy

Nepotism laws refer to limitations on governmental entities' authority to hire certain close relatives of public officials. The following questions and answers provide a layperson's explanation of state nepotism laws as they apply to local government officials and are intended to provide general guidance on the issues. Local government officials should consult with their legal counsel regarding the application of the law to the facts of each particular situation.

What is nepotism?

Nepotism is the hiring of family or relatives. Anti-nepotism laws prohibit a governmental entity from hiring certain close relatives of a public official. The nepotism laws are contained in chapter 573 of the Government Code. The nepotism statutes prohibit a public official from appointing, confirming the appointment of, or voting for the appointment or confirmation of the appointment of a close relative to a paid public position.¹ A close relative under nepotism laws is someone who is related to the official within a prohibited degree by consanguinity (relationship by blood) or a prohibited degree by affinity (relationship by marriage).²

What types of local government officials are subject to the nepotism laws?

The nepotism statutes apply to any public official³ who is the final hiring authority or is a member of the governing body that has final hiring authority.⁴ If the governing body is the hiring authority, then nepotism limitations would apply to close relatives of any members of the governing body. However, if an employee, such as the city manager, possesses the final hiring authority, then the nepotism limitations relate to persons who are close relatives of that employee. It should be noted that the determination of who is the hiring authority depends on whether an officer may exercise control over hiring decisions.⁵ For example, a governing body or public employee would still be considered the hiring authority if either may exercise control over a hiring decision, even though such authority may have been delegated to another individual or entity. See question 13 for further details.

What types of actions are generally prohibited under the nepotism law?

The nepotism statutes prohibit a public official from appointing, confirming the appointment of, or voting for the appointment or confirmation of the appointment of a close relative of certain public officials to a paid public position or employment.⁶

What relatives of a public official are covered by the statutory limitations on relationships by consanguinity (blood)?

¹ Tex. Gov't Code Ann. § 573.041.

² *Id.* § 573.002.

³ *Id.* § 573.001(3). ("Public official means: (A) an officer of this state or of a district, county, municipality, precinct, school district, or other political subdivision of this state; (B) an officer or member of a board of this state or of a district, county, municipality, school district, or other political subdivision of this state; or (C) a judge of a court created by or under a statute of this state.")

⁴ *Id.* § 573.041.

⁵ *Pena v. Rio Grande City Consol. Indep. Sch. Dist.* 616 S.W.2d 658, 659 (Tex. Civ. App.—Eastland 1981, no writ); Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. Nos. GA-226 (2004); GA-73 (2003) at 3; JC-336 (2001) at 4; DM-2 (1991) at 1.

⁶ Tex. Gov't Code Ann. § 573.041

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A public official may not vote on the appointment of an individual who is related to the official within the first, second, or third degree by consanguinity (relationships by blood).⁷ Such relationships occur if the official and the potential hire share either a common ancestry or where one is the descendant of the other.⁸ The following relatives of a public official would fall within the prohibited first, second or third degree of consanguinity:⁹

Relatives related within the first degree by consanguinity include a public official's mother, father, sons and daughters.

Relatives related within the second degree by consanguinity include a public official's brothers, sisters, grandmothers, grandfathers, grandsons and granddaughters.

Relatives related within the third degree by consanguinity include a public official's great-grandfathers, great-grandmothers, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, great-grandsons and great-granddaughters.

A public official's adopted child is considered to be the child of the public official under the nepotism laws.¹⁰

What relationships by affinity (marriage) are covered by the statutory limitations?

A public official is prohibited from voting on the appointment of an individual who is related to the official within the first or second degree by affinity (marriage).¹¹ Such relationships occur if the official and the potential hire are related to each other by marrying each other or the spouse of one of the individuals is related blood (consanguinity) to the other individual.¹² The following relatives of a public official would fall within the prohibited first or second degree of affinity:¹³

Relatives related within the first degree by affinity include a public official's husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, stepsons and stepdaughters.

Relatives related within the second degree include a public official's sisters-in-law (brother's spouse or spouse's sister), brothers-in-law (sister's spouse or spouse's brother), spouse's grandmothers, spouse's grandfathers, spouse's granddaughters, and spouse's grandsons.

⁷ *Id.* § 573.002.

⁸ *Id.* § 573.022.

⁹ *Id.* § 573.023(c)(1) - (3).

¹⁰ *Id.* § 573.022(b).

¹¹ *Id.* § 573.002.

¹² *Id.* § 573.024(a).

¹³ *Id.* § 573.025.

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What happens if it takes two marriages to establish the relationship with the public official?

If it takes two marriages to establish a relationship between the public official and the proposed hire, the nepotism laws do not apply.¹⁴ For example, the attorney general concluded that a public entity was not prohibited from hiring the brother-in-law of a public official's wife.¹⁵ In this situation, it takes two marriages to establish the relationship because the public official is related by marriage to his wife, who is related to her brother-in-law by marriage. However, the nepotism laws would prevent a public official from hiring his sister's husband (brother-in-law). In this case, only one marriage separates the two individuals; therefore, nepotism provisions would apply.

What actions must a public official take if he or she has a nepotism conflict?

If a governing body member has a nepotism conflict, neither the governing body nor its members may employ or contract with a close relative of that member, unless there is a specific statutory exception allowing such an action.¹⁶ Similarly, if a city manager or other officer who has final hiring authority has a nepotism conflict, the governing body may not appoint or vote for the individual who is the close relative of that city officer unless there is a specific statutory, or possibly a city charter exception that allows such an action.¹⁷ State law does not require any specific procedural steps or documentation of a nepotism conflict.

Do the nepotism laws apply to cities with a population of less than 200?

No. The nepotism statute does not apply to cities with fewer than 200 people.¹⁸ However, a city may adopt local prohibitions in its home-rule charter, ethics ordinances or personnel policies that would prevent hiring a close relative.

May a close relative be appointed to an unpaid position?

Yes. The nepotism laws apply to paid positions only. A paid position is one that is directly or indirectly *compensated* from public funds or fees.¹⁹ If the individual holding the position is merely reimbursed for actual expenses, it is not a paid position.

¹⁴ Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. Nos. O-119 (1939); O-7424 (1946); Tex. Att'y Gen. LO-88-121.

¹⁵ Tex. Att'y Gen. LO-88-121.

¹⁶ Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §§ 573.041, .061. *See also* Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. No. JC-184 (2000) at 2 (A municipal utility district's action in employing the spouse of a board member in a paid position violated section 573.041 of the Government Code, even though the related board member abstained from participation in the action).

¹⁷ Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §§ 573.041, .061.

¹⁸ *Id.* § 573.061(7).

¹⁹ *Id.* § 573.041; Tex. Att'y Gen. LO-96-10.

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May other members of a governing body vote to hire a person who is a close relative of a public official if the official with the nepotism conflict abstains from deliberating and/or voting?

No. Other members of the governing body may not vote to hire a person who is a close relative of a public official. The abstention of a public official with the nepotism conflict does not relieve the remaining members from the prohibition against hiring a close relative of another public official.²⁰

Who is considered the hiring authority for purposes of potential nepotism violations?

For nepotism purposes, the hiring authority is the individual or entity that may exercise control over the hiring decision.²¹ If the governing body is the hiring authority, then nepotism limitations would apply to close relatives of any of the members of the governing body. If an employee, such as the city manager, possesses the hiring authority, then the members of the governing body may not hire persons who are close relatives of that employee.

May a city council or a city manager delegate the power to hire to avoid a nepotism problem?

The “applicability of the nepotism law depends on whether an officer or the governing body may exercise control over hiring decisions.”²² A city council would still be considered the hiring authority if it could exercise control over a hiring decision, even though it delegated the hiring decision to another person or entity by ordinance. In one instance, the attorney general reviewed a city council’s attempt, by city ordinance, to delegate the hiring authority for city staff to a city administrator. The attorney general concluded that this delegation did not relieve the members of the city council from being considered the hiring authority for purposes of the nepotism statutes.²³

Texas law distinguishes between the power of a home-rule city to delegate hiring authority through its city charter versus a delegation that is done by city ordinance.²⁴ If the delegation of the hiring authority is contained in the city charter, it is recognized for nepotism purposes as a valid delegation of the hiring power. However, if a city simply delegates the hiring authority by ordinance, it would not, for nepotism purposes, change who was considered the hiring authority.²⁵ This conclusion is based on the fact that the council could amend or repeal an ordinance at any time, while it would take an election to amend a city charter. For example, the attorney general has concluded that the nepotism statutes did not preclude a city from hiring a relative of a city council member where the city charter provided that the city manager was the

²⁰ Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. No. JC-184 (2000).

²¹ *Pena*, 616 S.W.2d at 659; Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. Nos. GA-415 (2006); GA-226 (2004); GA-73 (2003) at 3; JC-336 (2001) at 4; DM-2 (1991) at 1.

²² Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. No. DM-2 (1991) at 1.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.*, See Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. No. JC-336 (2001).

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final hiring authority and the council members reserved no authority to participate in the hiring decision.²⁶

If a city has a city manager form of government, may the city manager hire close relatives of city council members?

If a city has a city manager form of government, the city manager may hire close relatives of city council members if the city manager alone possesses the hiring authority. See question 12 above. Such relatives would include persons who are related to city council members within the first, second or third degree by consanguinity or within the first or second degree by affinity.

If a city has a city manager form of government, may the city manager hire his or her own close relatives?

If a city has a city manager form of government and the city manager alone possesses the hiring authority, the city manager may not hire his or her own close relatives. See question 13 above. Such relatives would include persons who are related to the city manager within the first, second or third degree by consanguinity or within the first or second degree by affinity.

If a city has a city administrator but has never adopted a city manager form of government, may the city administrator hire close relatives of city council members?

No. If a city has a city administrator, but has never adopted a city manager form of government, the city administrator will generally be unable to hire close relatives of city council members. In an attorney general opinion, the attorney general's office stated the "applicability of the nepotism law depends on whether an officer *may* exercise control over hiring decisions."²⁷ Since the city council usually exercises control over the hiring decision by a city administrator, the nepotism statute would usually not prevent the city administrator from hiring his or her close relatives.

If a city has a city administrator but has never adopted a city manager form of government, may the city administrator hire his or her own close relatives?

Yes. If a city has a city administrator, but has never adopted a city manager form of government, the city administrator will generally be able to hire his or her own close relatives. Since the city council usually exercises control over the hiring decision by a city administrator, the nepotism laws would not prevent the city from hiring the administrator's own close relatives. If a city administrator did have final hiring authority, the nepotism laws would prevent the hiring of the administrator's close relatives.

²⁶ Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. Nos. GA-595 (2008); O-5274 (1943). However, if the city charter reserves a role for the city council such as consultation, the nepotism restrictions still apply. Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. No. GA-226 (2004) at 3. For additional discussion of the delegation issue in regard to school district boards and superintendents, see Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. Nos. GA-123 (2003); GA-177 (2004).

²⁷ Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. No. DM-2 (1991).

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Do the nepotism laws apply to the appointment or hiring of an independent contractor by the governing body if the contractor is a close relative of an official?

Yes. The nepotism laws prohibit the appointment or hiring of an independent contractor by the governing body if the contractor is a close relative of one of the members of the governing body. Nonetheless, the nepotism prohibition would not prohibit the governing body from executing a contract with a corporation that employs the close relative unless the corporation is in actuality the “alter ego” of an individual who is closely related to an official.²⁸

Do the nepotism laws prohibit close relatives from being hired to work together for the same entity?

The nepotism laws do not generally prohibit close relatives from being hired to work together for the same entity. The nepotism laws do not apply unless either relative has the final hiring authority like a public official. Local governmental entities might prohibit such arrangements by charter, ordinance or policy.

Do the nepotism laws prohibit close relatives from being hired to work together within the same local government department?

The nepotism laws do not generally prohibit close relatives from being hired to work together within the same local entity department. The nepotism laws do not apply unless either relative has the final hiring authority like a public official. Local governmental entities might prohibit such arrangements by charter, ordinance or policy.

Do the nepotism laws apply to the appointment of a public official's close relatives to serve as board or commission members?

The nepotism laws prohibit the appointment of a public official's close relatives to serve as a board or commission member only if the position is a paid position.²⁹ The term “position” is defined to include “an office, clerkship, employment, or duty.”³⁰ If the local entity paid such appointees, nepotism statutes would become applicable.

Do the nepotism laws apply to the appointment of a public official's close relatives to serve as members of purely advisory committees?

No. Generally, the nepotism law would not apply to the appointment of an official's close relatives to serve as members of purely advisory committees if the members are not compensated. The nepotism law governs the hiring or appointment of an individual to a position that is directly or indirectly compensated from public funds.³¹ The term “position” is defined to include “an office, clerkship, employment, or duty.”³² Since an advisory committee is typically

²⁸ Tex. Att’y Gen. LO-88-44.

²⁹ Tex. Gov’t Code Ann. § 573.041.

³⁰ *Id.* § 573.001(2).

³¹ *Id.* § 573.041.

³² *Id.* § 573.001(2).

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not a paid position, the nepotism laws would not apply. However, if the positions were paid positions, the nepotism laws would prevent the appointment of officials' close relatives to purely advisory committees.³³

Do the nepotism laws apply to the appointment of close relatives of an official to unpaid volunteer positions?

No. The nepotism laws do not apply to the appointment of close relatives of a public official to unpaid volunteer positions. The nepotism law applies only to paid positions.

Do the nepotism laws prohibit close relatives from being elected to serve together on the same governing body?

No. The nepotism laws do not prohibit close relatives from being elected to serve together on the same governing body. The nepotism laws limit actions only by the governing body or the entity's employee with final hiring authority. They do not limit the ability of the electorate to elect close relatives to the same governing body.

Do the nepotism laws prohibit close relatives of a member of a governing body from being appointed by that body to serve on the governing body?

The nepotism laws would prohibit close relatives of a member of a governing body from being appointed by that body to serve on the governing body, but only if the members of the governing body are paid. While the electorate could elect close relatives to the same governing body, the governing body itself could not appoint close relatives of its members to a paid office or employment.

Do the nepotism laws prohibit a person from running for a governing body if the candidate has a close relative who is currently a public employee?

No. The nepotism laws do not prohibit a person from running for a governing body if the candidate has a close relative who is currently an employee of the local entity. Nonetheless, the nepotism law may force the employee to resign if the candidate is elected, depending on how long the employee has worked in his or her present job, as discussed in question 26.

May an employee continue employment if a close relative of the employee is elected or appointed to the governing body?

An employee of a local entity may continue employment if the employee has been continuously employed for a sufficient time period immediately prior to the appointment or election of the close relative.³⁴ If the employee's close relative was appointed to the governing body, the employee must have been continuously employed by the local entity for at least 30 days prior to the appointment in order to retain his or her job.³⁵ If the employee's close relative was elected to a non-county local governing body, the employee must have been continuously employed by the

³³ *Id.* § 573.041.

³⁴ *Id.* § 573.062.

³⁵ *Id.* § 573.062(a)(1), (2)(A).

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local governing body for at least six months before the member assumed office.³⁶ If the employee's close relative was elected to a state or county office, the employee must have been continuously employed by that state or county office for at least one year before the public official assumed office.³⁷

What is considered “prior continuous employment” for purposes of the nepotism law?

Prior continuous employment for purposes of the nepotism law is considered to be immediately prior and uninterrupted employment.³⁸ Additionally, in counting back the required time period, 30 days, six months or one year, the critical date is the date the public official assumes office (sworn in and qualified to serve).³⁹ In an attorney general opinion, the attorney general concluded that a teacher who retired from a full-time, certified teacher position had broken her employment with the school district and did not qualify for the prior continuous employment exception to the anti-nepotism statute.⁴⁰

May an employee continue employment if he or she marries a close relative of a member of the governing body?

An employee of a local entity who marries the close relative of an elected member of the governing body must resign if the employee was not continuously employed for the relevant time period (30 days, six months or one year, as appropriate) before the member assumed office.⁴¹

May an employee receive a pay raise or promotion in the future if the employee kept his or her job under the prior continuous employment exception?

Yes. An employee of a local entity is eligible to receive pay raises and promotions after being permitted to keep his or her job under the prior continuous employment exception.⁴² The public official who is a relative of the employee generally may not participate in any deliberation or voting on the employee's status or compensation.⁴³ Nonetheless, the nepotism laws would not prevent an official from voting on a class or category of employees.⁴⁴ For example, an official may participate in a decision to give all employees a cost-of-living raise even though an official's close relative is an employee.⁴⁵

³⁶ *Id.* § 573.062(a)(1), (2)(B).

³⁷ *Id.* § 573.062(a)(1), (2)(C).

³⁸ *Id.* § 573.062.

³⁹ *Bean v. State*, 691 S.W.2d 773, 775 (Tex. App.—El Paso 1985, pet. ref'd).

⁴⁰ Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. No. JC-442 (2001). *See also* Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. Nos. GA-1024 (2013); JC-0185 (2000); JM-45 (1983).

⁴¹ Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. Nos. DM-132 (1992); GA-121 (2003); Tex. Att'y Gen. LO-93-114.

⁴² Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. Nos. DM-132 (1992); JM-1188 (1990); GA-121 (2003); Tex. Att'y Gen. LO-93-114.

⁴³ Tex. Gov't Code Ann. § 573.062(b).

⁴⁴ *Id.* § 573.062(b). *See* Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. Nos. JC-193 (2000) at 2-3; JC-336 (2001) at 3; JC-442 (2001) at 2; JC-546 (2002); JC-558 (2002).

⁴⁵ Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. Nos. DM-46 (1991) at 233-234, JM-1188 (1990).

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Do nepotism laws apply to hiring close relatives of a former public official or of an official who resigned?

The nepotism laws may apply to the hiring of close relatives of a former public official or of an official who resigned. Under article XVI, section 17 of the Texas Constitution (the holdover provision), an officer continues to serve and have the duties and powers of the office until a successor qualifies for the office. Thus, the nepotism laws would prohibit the hiring of a holdover officer's close relatives to a paid position with the local entity.⁴⁶ However, once the local entity has filled the former officer's position and has qualified and sworn this person into office, the local entity may hire a close relative of the former official.

Do nepotism laws apply to hiring persons who are related to a public official's ex-wife or ex-husband?

In certain situations, the nepotism law will prevent the local entity from hiring close relatives of a public official's ex-wife or ex-husband. Specifically, if there is a living child from the former marriage (regardless of the age of the child), the nepotism law will prevent the local entity from hiring persons who are close relatives of the official's ex-wife or ex-husband. Divorce does not end a nepotism relationship if a child of that marriage is still living.⁴⁷

Do the nepotism laws apply to "trading hires," where one jurisdiction hires the close relative of a public official in another jurisdiction in exchange for that jurisdiction hiring his or her close relative?

Yes. Public officials may not trade nepotistic appointments.⁴⁸ In other words, a public official may not appoint an individual who is closely related to a neighboring public official, with the understanding that the other official will return the favor by hiring one's own relatives.

May a home-rule city provide more restrictive nepotism limitations?

A home-rule city may generally provide more restrictive nepotism limitations, with one exception. A city is specifically forbidden from adopting a local nepotism provision that would provide a tougher threshold for qualifying under the prior continuous employment exception.⁴⁹ For example, the attorney general concluded a home-rule city charter provision could not prohibit a son of a council member who had four years of employment with the city from receiving a promotion. Nonetheless, the related council member could not participate in any deliberation or voting on the promotion of her son.⁵⁰

May a general-law city (Type A, Type B or Type C city) provide further and more restrictive nepotism limitations?

⁴⁶ Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. Nos. JM-636 (1987) at 2; DM-2 (1991).

⁴⁷ Tex. Gov't Code Ann. § 573.024(b).

⁴⁸ *Id.* § 573.044.

⁴⁹ Tex. Gov't Code Ann. § 573.062(a).

⁵⁰ Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. No. JC-546 (2002).

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Arguably, a general-law city may pass a more restrictive nepotism limitation provided such an ordinance did not conflict with state law and the authority to do so was fairly implied from some other power of the general law city.⁵¹ No court or attorney general opinion has discussed this question.

Are there other state statutes that may provide stricter nepotism restrictions for particular situations or public officials?

There may be certain state statutes that apply to a particular set of circumstances. Before a public official participates in an official action regarding a close relative, the official may want to consult with legal counsel as to the applicable law.⁵²

If a contract would result in a violation of the nepotism laws, is the contract illegal and void?

Yes. The nepotism law addresses the hiring of an individual person by a governmental body. If a contract when signed is an employment contract of an individual who is related within a prohibited degree, the nepotism law would apply and the contract is void from its inception. Attorney General Opinion GA-177 (2004) contains examples of such contracts of employment. On the other hand, several attorney general opinions have held that when a relationship covered by the nepotism statutes arises during the course of an individual's employment, the individual may serve out the term of his or her contract.⁵³ The reasoning behind this rule is that a violation of the nepotism laws would not occur until the employing body or officer had to take action to renew the individual's contract.⁵⁴ In the absence of a valid contract for a specified period of employment or with respect to an employee who is an "at will" employee, an individual could remain until the end of the pay period. At the end of the pay period, the individual would have to resign to avoid a violation of the nepotism laws.⁵⁵ The above discussion assumes that the individual does not qualify for the prior continuous employment exception.

May a person be charged with a crime if he or she violates the nepotism laws?

Yes. An official who violates the nepotism laws commits official misconduct and a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$100 or more than \$1000.⁵⁶

Must a public official be removed from office if he or she has violated the nepotism laws?

Yes. An official must be removed immediately from office if he or she is convicted of violating the nepotism laws and the conviction becomes final.⁵⁷ State law provides "the removal from the position shall be made immediately and summarily by the original appointing authority" when a

⁵¹ Tex. Loc. Gov't Code Ann. § 51.012.

⁵² See generally Tex. Health & Safety Code Ann. §§ 534.0065(e)(5), 534.0115; Tex. Tax Code Ann. § 6.05(f); Tex. Transp. Code Ann. § 68.038(c); Tex. Water Code Ann. §§ 49.059(d)(1), 57.262.

⁵³ Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. Nos. MW-286 (1980); V-785 (1949); O-1408 (1939).

⁵⁴ *Bean*, 691 S.W.2d at 775.

⁵⁵ Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. Nos. MW-286 (1980); V-785 (1949); O-1408 (1939).

⁵⁶ Tex. Gov't Code Ann. § 573.084.

⁵⁷ *Id.* § 573.081.

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criminal conviction becomes final.⁵⁸ If the official is not removed within 30 days after the conviction becomes final, a proceeding by the local prosecutor may be brought to remove the official.⁵⁹

Are board members of a municipal utility district subject to the nepotism laws?

Yes. Nepotism laws do apply to board members of a municipal utility district (MUD).⁶⁰ The nepotism laws apply to “an officer or member of a board of this state or of a district, county, municipality, precinct, school district, or other political subdivision of this state.”⁶¹ A MUD is a political subdivision created under Texas Constitution article XVI, section 59.⁶² Board members of MUDs may not participate in the employment or appointment of any individual related to any board member within the third degree by consanguinity or the second degree by affinity.⁶³

Does a city council member violate the nepotism laws by appointing a close relative to the board of an economic development corporation?

No. A city council member does not violate chapter 573 of the Government Code when appointing a close relative to the board of an economic development corporation (EDC).⁶⁴ A public official is forbidden to appoint, confirm the appointment of, or vote for the appointment or confirmation of an individual to a position that is to be directly or indirectly compensated from public funds or fees if the individual and the public official are related within the third degree by consanguinity or within the second degree by affinity.⁶⁵ However, the Development Corporation Act states that members of the board of directors of an EDC shall serve without compensation except for being reimbursed for their actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.⁶⁶ The statutory reimbursement for member’s actual expenses incurred are not considered compensation for purposes of section 573.041.⁶⁷ Thus, the nepotism law would not apply.

May a public official make final approval of reassignments of close relatives who have been continuously employed in his or her department?

A public official’s relative who is within the third degree of consanguinity or second degree of affinity may not be employed in a position that the public official may appoint.⁶⁸ However, an employee whose close relative is elected or appointed to office may retain employment if, prior to the relative’s election or appointment, the employee has been continuously employed in the position for a certain period of time.⁶⁹ The public official may not deliberate or vote on “the

⁵⁸ *Id.* § 573.081(b).

⁵⁹ *Id.* §§ 573.081(a), .082.

⁶⁰ Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. No. JC-184 (2000).

⁶¹ Tex. Gov’t Code Ann. § 573.001(3)(B).

⁶² Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. No. JC-184 (2000).

⁶³ TEX. GOV’T CODE ANN. §§ 573.002, .041.

⁶⁴ Tex. Att’y Gen. LO-96-010.

⁶⁵ Tex. Gov’t Code Ann. § 573.041.

⁶⁶ Tex. Loc. Gov’t Code Ann. § 501.062(d).

⁶⁷ Tex. Att’y Gen. LO-96-010; Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. No. JM-195 (1984).

⁶⁸ Tex. Gov’t Code Ann. §§ 573.002, .041; Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. Nos. JC-193 (2000); JC-336 (2001).

⁶⁹ Tex. Gov’t Code Ann. § 573.062(a).

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appointment, reappointment, confirmation of the appointment or reappointment, employment, re-employment, change in status, compensation, or dismissal of” such continuously employed relative.⁷⁰ The public official may take action with respect to his or her relative only if the action is “based in objective criteria” and may not take any such action that allows “for the preference or discretion of the officeholder.”⁷¹ For example, a police chief who has final approval of employment and reassignments within the police department is prohibited from approving the transfers of his son or nephew because the approval requires an exercise of the chief’s discretion.⁷²

⁷⁰ *Id.* § 573.062(b).

⁷¹ Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. Nos. DM-46 (1991), JC-193 (2000), JC-336 (2001).

⁷² Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. Nos. JC-193 (2000), JC-336 (2001).

SIGNS

Political and Campaign Signs



Right of Way Division

Interstate and Primary Highways

During campaign season, the landscape blooms with a special kind of flower - the political sign. Unlike wildflowers which are welcome anywhere, putting campaign signs on public lands is illegal. So before you plant that sign, learn the law and keep Texas beautiful.

TxDOT only controls the location of commercial signs, and never controls the content of any signage. If you have questions about what may be on a political sign, please contact the Texas Ethics Commission at (512) 463-5800.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I place political signs?

You can place your signs anywhere so long as they are:

- 1) not in the highway right of way;
- 2) not in a location that poses a safety hazard (e.g. blocking sight to a driveway); and
- 3) placed with the landowner's permission.

Always make sure to check with local authorities (cities, counties, etc.) as they may have their own restrictions on sign placement.

When can I place political signs?

Cities and counties may have their own time restrictions for political signs, however TxDOT does not enforce any timing restrictions.

There is a sign on private property posing a safety hazard

If you believe a sign or signs create a safety hazard, contact local law enforcement as they can have the owner remove or relocate their sign(s).

There are signs located on the Right of Way (ROW)

Signs cannot be placed on the ROW as per Texas Transportation Code §393.002. "A sheriff, constable, or other trained volunteer authorized by the commissioners court of a county may confiscate a sign placed in violation of Section 393.002." [TEX. TRANS. CODE §393.003]. For state-maintained highways, your local TxDOT district office also has the authority to remove signs located on state owned right of way.

Where is the ROW?

If you are unsure where the ROW starts or ends, you should contact your local TxDOT district office.

Online Information

This same information is available online on TxDOT's website and can be accessed by the below method:

Go to
www.txdot.gov



Select "Do business"



Select "Right of Way"



Select "View campaign sign laws"

OR

Search Online:
"TxDOT Campaign Signs"

Contact Us

The contact information for your local TxDOT office can be found online at:

www.txdot.gov → About → TxDOT Districts

Then find your county and select the "Discover" link for specific contact information.

For any other questions concerning signs along Texas highways, contact the TxDOT Commercial Signs Regulatory Section:

ROW_OutdoorAdvertising@txdot.gov

or by phone:

(512) 416-3030

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION 2023-2024 EDUCATIONAL SERIES **COMMERCIAL & CAMPAIGN SIGNS**

- Highway Beautification Act
- Commercial Sign Regulation
- Licensing and Permitting
- Scenic Byways Program
- Campaign Signs

TxDOT RESOURCE LINKS

Scan the QR codes with your mobile device or click on the resource link to direct you to additional resources and more details on the information provided in this document.



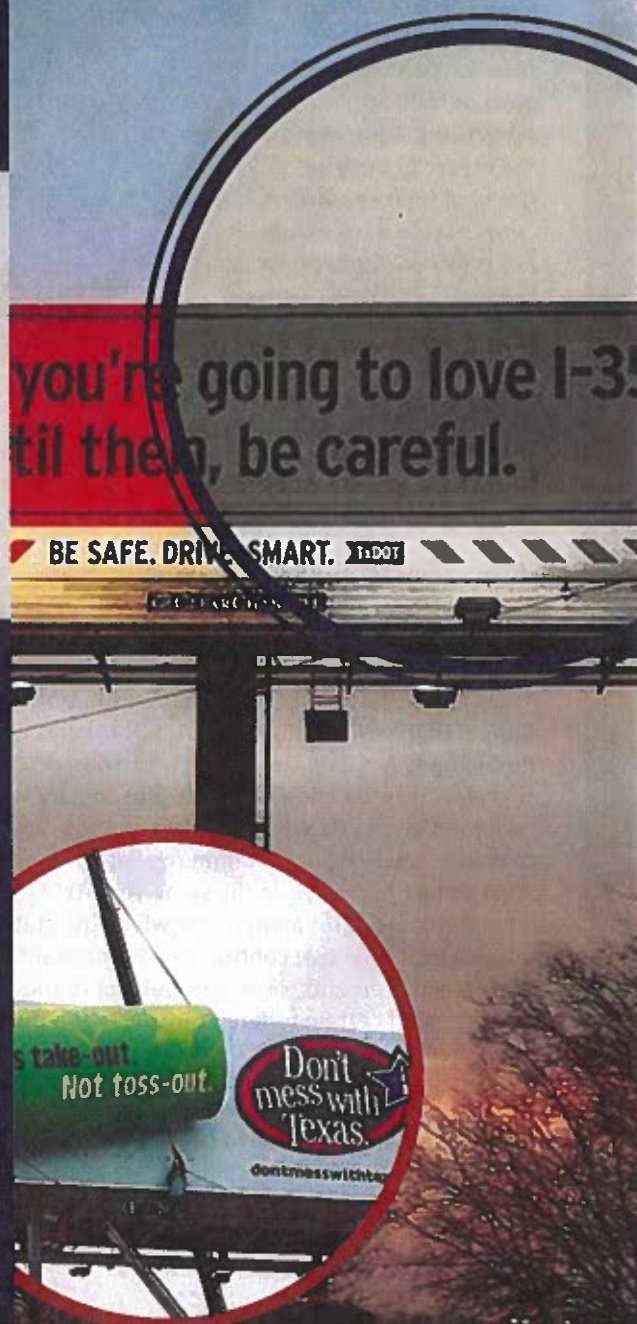
Texas Department of Transportation

TxDOT's public website for agency information and resources focused on meeting the needs of drivers, businesses, government officials, and those who want to learn more about TxDOT.



TxDOT 2023-2024 Educational Series

TxDOT's complete 2023-2024 Educational Series that focuses on a range of transportation issues affecting TxDOT and the State of Texas.



OVERVIEW

The federal Highway Beautification Act (HBA) of 1965 requires the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to regulate commercial signs, otherwise referred to as outdoor signs or outdoor advertising signs, along the federally designated National Highway System. Texas's State Rural Roads Act provides direction for outdoor advertising signs on all other public roads located outside of the corporate limits of cities, towns, and other local governments in Texas. The following provides an overview of the laws governing commercial signs and billboards, and the roles of TxDOT and municipalities in regulating, licensing, and permitting these signs.



COMMERCIAL SIGN REGULATION

TxDOT's commercial sign regulations apply to any commercial sign within 660 feet of the highway right of way along interstate and primary highways inside incorporated areas. Outside of incorporated areas, regulations extend to any commercial sign visible from the main traveled highway. State law prohibits commercial signs within these boundaries unless the location falls in a defined, unzoned commercial or industrial area.

In addition to regulation along interstate and primary highways, the State Rural Roads Act ensures the regulation of outdoor advertising signs along all other public roads on the state highway system outside of the incorporated area of a municipality. A municipality may seek certification to regulate commercial signs within their jurisdictional limits through TxDOT, which is ultimately reviewed and approved by the Federal Highway Administration. If TxDOT and the Federal Highway Administration certify a municipality to regulate commercial signs, TxDOT waives the state commercial sign permit requirement within the incorporated limits. A municipality's zoning ordinances and local regulations control where commercial signs may be located. Local ordinances vary in their restrictiveness compared to state regulations, however, local ordinances may not violate either federal regulations or the 1972 federal-state agreement.

HIGHWAY BEAUTIFICATION ACT

Texas law authorizes TxDOT to administer and enforce the federal Highway Beautification Act (HBA) and Texas's State Rural Roads Act. The Texas Legislature passed the Texas Highway Beautification Act in 1972 to comply with the Federal Highway Beautification Act of 1965, which requires that each state regulate commercial signs along interstate and primary highways. In the same year, TxDOT entered into a federal-state agreement under which the state agreed to enforce the "effective control" of commercial signs to meet federal requirements, or else be subject to the loss of up to 10 percent of certain federal transportation funding for the state.

The three categories of funding jeopardized by failure to maintain effective control of commercial signs are the:

1. National Highway Performance Program;
2. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program; and
3. Surface Transportation Program.

In 2022, these three categories of funding totaled \$4.413 billion of TxDOT's federal highway funding. If imposed, a 10 percent penalty could cost Texas \$441.3 million annually in federal transportation funding.

LICENSING AND PERMITTING

Before a person or entity may erect or maintain a regulated commercial sign, they must obtain a commercial sign operator's license from TxDOT and renew the license annually. After TxDOT issues an operator's license, the commercial sign owner may apply for a permit, which is only valid for the location indicated on the original application and the approved commercial sign described on that application. A sign operator must renew each sign permit annually.

When the Texas Legislature first adopted the original highway beautification laws, the legislation grandfathered the existing regulations for certain commercial signs and allowed those signs to remain in place as non-conforming commercial signs. If TxDOT permitted a commercial sign location under the provisions of the Highway Beautification Act, that sign may also become non-conforming due to a change in law, regulation, or commercial sign conditions.

Many restrictions apply to non-conforming commercial signs under both federal and state laws and regulations relating to commercial signs. The purpose of most of these restrictions is to ensure that these non-conforming commercial signs remain in substantially the same condition that they were in when they became non-conforming. The operator of a grandfathered commercial with a status of non-conforming sign cannot replace the sign with a new sign and can only maintain the non-conforming sign on a limited basis. If the operator of a non-conforming commercial sign does not properly maintain the sign under the non-conforming regulations and TxDOT cancels the permit for the sign at the non-conforming location, the operator will permanently lose that sign location.







**Commercial Signs
Regulatory Program**

[https://www.txdot.gov/business/right-of-way/
commercial-signs-regulatory-program.html](https://www.txdot.gov/business/right-of-way/commercial-signs-regulatory-program.html)

SCENIC BYWAYS PROGRAM

Most recently, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 941 (87th Regular Legislative Session, 2021), establishing a State Scenic Byways Program and provides that TxDOT may only designate the specific roadway segments listed in the Texas Transportation Code as a State Scenic Byway. Under the program, commercial signs are prohibited on and may not be visible from those specified roadway segments. The program allows TxDOT to receive nominations for State Scenic Byways and National Scenic Byways, and applications for federal grant funding. This legislation did not alter TxDOT's operations related to commercial sign regulation as TxDOT already prohibited signs on these road segments, in accordance with existing law. Additionally, TxDOT does not administer the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byways Program through the State Scenic Byways Program established through SB 941.





Scenic Byways Program

[https://www.txdot.gov/business/grants-and-funding/
scenic-byways.html](https://www.txdot.gov/business/grants-and-funding/scenic-byways.html)

CAMPAIGN SIGNS

State law prohibits candidates and their supporters from placing campaign signs on public right of way including sign placement on trees, telephone poles, traffic signs, and other objects in the right of way. TxDOT controls the placement of signs on state highway right of way. TxDOT employees, a county sheriff, or a constable (depending upon the jurisdiction) can remove campaign signs that violate state law. If a sign is illegally placed in the public right of way, TxDOT will remove it without prior notice. All costs associated with sign removal will be the responsibility of the sign owner.

Campaign signs along Texas roads can be placed on private property with the owner's permission. A candidate considering placing a sign inside of incorporated municipal limits should check with the local government as the signs may also be subject to local ordinances.





Campaign Signs

[https://www.txdot.gov/business/right-of-way/
campaign-signs.html](https://www.txdot.gov/business/right-of-way/campaign-signs.html)



CONNECTING YOU WITH TEXAS

RESOURCES

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PROJECT TRACKER

Project Tracker is the gateway to up-to-date information about TxDOT highway improvement projects, providing 24/7-access to the public, employees, and elected officials.



TxDOT is committed to your safety and to the reliability of the information contained on this site. While road conditions can change rapidly, DriveTexas.org is an industry leader in providing some of the most accurate and up-to-date travel-related information currently available to drivers in Texas. Information presented here is as close to real time as possible. For those who use our roads, please do not use this site while operating a motor vehicle.

Be Safe. Drive Smart. Thank you!



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

2023-2024 Educational Series

TxDOT's complete 2023-2024 Educational Series that focuses on a range of transportation issues affecting TxDOT and the state of Texas.



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

TxDOT's Government Affairs Division works closely with government on both the state and federal levels through the State Legislative Affairs and Federal Affairs sections.



PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD

STRATEGIC GOALS

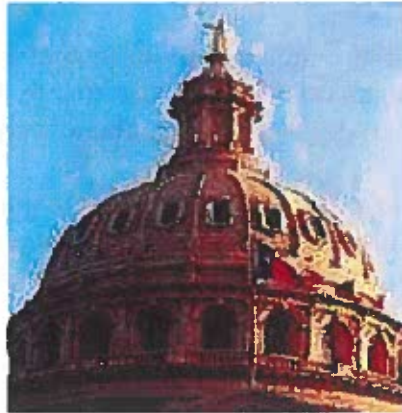
TxDOT's performance dashboard provides a transparent way to show how we are doing as an agency. We highlight performance measures related to the seven strategic goals that guide our mission of Connecting You with Texas: Promote Safety, Optimize System Performance, Preserve Our Assets, Deliver the Right Projects, Focus on the Customer, Foster Stewardship and Value Our Employees.



ADVERTISING

POLITICAL ADVERTISING

What You Need to Know



The Texas Election Code requires certain disclosures and notices on political advertising. The law also prohibits certain types of misrepresentation in political advertising and campaign communications. This brochure explains what you need to know to insure that your political advertising and campaign communications comply with the law.

If you are not sure what the law requires, do the cautious thing. Use the political advertising disclosure statement whenever you think it might be necessary, and do not use any possibly misleading information in political advertising or a campaign communication. If you are using political advertising or campaign communications from a prior campaign, you should check to see if the law has changed since that campaign.

Candidates for federal office should check with the Federal Election Commission at (800) 424-9530 for information on federal political advertising laws.

NOTICE: This guide is intended only as a general overview of the disclosure statements that must appear on political advertising as required under [Chapter 255 of the Election Code](#), which is distinct from political reporting requirements under [Chapter 254 of the Election Code](#).

**Texas Ethics Commission
P.O. Box 12070
Austin, Texas 78711-2070**

(512) 463-5800

TDD (800) 735-2989

Visit us at www.ethics.state.tx.us.

Revised July 16, 2019

REQUIRED DISCLOSURE ON POLITICAL ADVERTISING

I. What Is Political Advertising?

The disclosure statement and notice requirements discussed in this section apply to “political advertising.” In the law, “political advertising” is a specifically defined term. Do not confuse this special term with your own common-sense understanding of advertising.

To figure out if a communication is political advertising, you must look at what it says and where it appears. If a communication fits in one of the categories listed in Part A (below) and if it fits in one of the categories listed in Part B (below), it is political advertising.

Part A. What Does It Say?

1. Political advertising includes communications supporting or opposing a candidate for nomination or election to either a public office or an office of a political party (including county and precinct chairs).
2. Political advertising includes communications supporting or opposing an officeholder, a political party, or a measure (a ballot proposition).

Part B. Where Does It Appear?

1. Political advertising includes communications that appear in pamphlets, circulars, fliers, billboards or other signs, bumper stickers, or similar forms of written communication.
2. Political advertising includes communications that are published in newspapers, magazines, or other periodicals in return for consideration.
3. Political advertising includes communications that are broadcast by radio or television in return for consideration.
4. Political advertising includes communications that appear on an Internet website.

II. When Is a Disclosure Statement Required?

The law provides that political advertising that contains express advocacy is required to include a disclosure statement. The person who causes the political advertising to be published, distributed, or broadcast is responsible for including the disclosure statement.

The law does not define the term “express advocacy.” However, the law does provide that political advertising is deemed to contain express advocacy if it is authorized by a candidate, an agent of a candidate, or a political committee filing campaign finance reports. Therefore, a disclosure statement is required any time a candidate, a candidate’s agent, or a political committee authorizes political advertising.

The precise language of political advertising authorized by someone other than a candidate, the candidate's agent, or a political committee will determine if the advertising contains express advocacy and is therefore required to include a disclosure statement. Generally, the question is whether the communication expressly advocates the election or defeat of an identified candidate, or expressly advocates the passage or defeat of a measure, such as a bond election. The inclusion of words such as "vote for," "elect," "support," "defeat," "reject," or "Smith for Senate" would clearly constitute express advocacy, but express advocacy is not limited to communications that use those words. Similar phrases, such as "Cast your ballot for X," would also constitute express advocacy. Additionally, in 2007, the United States Supreme Court held that an advertisement included express advocacy or its functional equivalent "if the ad is susceptible to no reasonable interpretation other than as an appeal to vote for or against a specific candidate." *FEC v. Wis. Right to Life, Inc.*, 551 U.S. 449 (2007). It is a question of fact whether a particular communication constitutes express advocacy. If you are not sure whether political advertising contains express advocacy, do the cautious thing and include the disclosure statement. That way, there is no need to worry about whether you have violated the law.

Remember: The concept of "express advocacy" is relevant in determining whether political advertising is required to include a disclosure statement. However, the political advertising laws governing the right-of-way notice, misrepresentation, and use of public funds by political subdivisions will apply to political advertising regardless of whether the advertising contains express advocacy.

III. What Should the Disclosure Statement Say?

A disclosure statement must include the following:

1. the words "political advertising" or a recognizable abbreviation such as "pol. adv."; and
2. the full name of one of the following: (a) the person who paid for the political advertising; (b) the political committee authorizing the political advertising; or (c) the candidate or specific-purpose committee supporting the candidate, if the political advertising is authorized by the candidate.

The disclosure statement must appear on the face of the political advertising or be clearly spoken if the political advertising is audio only and does not include written text.

The advertising should not be attributed to entities such as "Committee to Elect John Doe" unless a specific-purpose committee named "Committee to Elect John Doe" has filed a campaign treasurer appointment with the Ethics Commission or a local filing authority.

IV. Are There Any Exceptions to the Disclosure Statement Requirement?

The following types of political advertising do not need the disclosure statement:

1. t-shirts, balloons, buttons, emery boards, hats, lapel stickers, small magnets, pencils, pens, pins, wooden nickels, candy wrappers, and similar materials;
2. invitations or tickets to political fundraising events or to events held to establish support for a candidate or officeholder;

3. an envelope that is used to transmit political advertising, provided that the political advertising in the envelope includes the disclosure statement;
4. circulars or fliers that cost in the aggregate less than \$500 to publish and distribute;
5. political advertising printed on letterhead stationery, if the letterhead includes the name of one of the following: (a) the person who paid for the advertising, (b) the political committee authorizing the advertising, or, (c) the candidate or specific-purpose committee supporting the candidate, if the political advertising is authorized by the candidate. (Note: There is also an exception for holiday greeting cards sent by an officeholder, provided that the officeholder's name and address appear on the card or the envelope.)
6. postings or re-postings on an Internet website if the person posting or re-posting is not an officeholder, candidate, or political committee and did not make an expenditure exceeding \$100 in a reporting period for political advertising beyond the basic cost of hardware messaging software and bandwidth;
7. an Internet social media profile webpage of a candidate or officeholder, if the webpage clearly and conspicuously displays the full name of the candidate or officeholder; and
8. postings or re-postings on an Internet website if the advertising is posted with a link to a publicly viewable Internet webpage that either contains the disclosure statement or is an Internet social media profile webpage of a candidate or officeholder that clearly and conspicuously displays the candidate's or officeholder's full name.

V. What Should I Do If I Discover That My Political Advertising Does Not Contain a Disclosure Statement?

The law prohibits a person from using, causing or permitting to be used, or continuing to use political advertising containing express advocacy if the person knows it does not include the disclosure statement. A person is presumed to know that the use is prohibited if the Texas Ethics Commission notifies the person in writing that the use is prohibited. If you receive notice from the Texas Ethics Commission that your political advertising does not comply with the law, you should stop using it immediately.

If you learn that a political advertising sign designed to be seen from the road does not contain a disclosure statement or contains an inaccurate disclosure statement, you should make a good faith attempt to remove or correct those signs that have been distributed. You are not required to attempt to recover other types of political advertising that have been distributed with a missing or inaccurate disclosure statement.

VI. The Fair Campaign Practices Act.

The [Fair Campaign Practices Act](#) sets out basic rules of decency, honesty, and fair play to be followed by candidates and political committees during a campaign. A candidate or political committee may choose to subscribe to the voluntary code by signing a copy of the code and filing it with the authority with whom the candidate or committee is required to file its campaign

treasurer appointment. A person subscribing to the code may indicate that fact on political advertising by including the following or a substantially similar statement:

(Name of the candidate or political committee, as appropriate) subscribes to the Code of Fair Campaign Practices.

VII. Special Notice to Political Subdivisions and School Districts.

You may not use public funds or resources for political advertising. Please see our “Publications and Guides” section of our website for more information.

ROAD SIGNS

I. When Is the “Right-Of-Way” Notice Required?

All written political advertising that is meant to be seen from a road must carry a “right-of-way” notice. It is a criminal offense to omit the “right-of-way” notice in the following circumstances:

1. if you enter into a contract or agreement to print or make written political advertising meant to be seen from a road; or
2. if you instruct another person to place the written political advertising meant to be seen from a road.

II. What Should the “Right-Of-Way” Notice Say?

Section 259.001 of the Texas Election Code prescribes the exact language of the notice:

NOTICE: IT IS A VIOLATION OF STATE LAW (CHAPTERS 392 AND 393, TRANSPORTATION CODE) TO PLACE THIS SIGN IN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY OF A HIGHWAY.

III. Do Yard Signs Have to Have the “Right-Of-Way” Notice?

Yes. The “right-of-way” notice requirement applies to signs meant to be seen from any road. The notice requirement assures that a person responsible for placing signs is aware of the restriction on placing the sign in the right-of-way of a highway.

IV. What About Bumper Stickers?

Bumper stickers do not need the “right-of-way” notice. They do, however, need a political advertising disclosure statement.

V. Where May I Place My Signs and How Long May Signs Be Posted?

For information about exactly where you may or may not place signs, or for information regarding the length of time your signs may be posted, check with your city or county government or your homeowner’s association. The Texas Ethics Commission does not have

jurisdiction over matters involving the location of signs, and the length of time that they may be posted.

MISREPRESENTATION

I. Are There Restrictions on the Contents of Political Advertising?

Political advertising and campaign communications may not misrepresent a person's identity or official title, nor may they misrepresent the true source of the advertising or communication. The election law does not address other types of misrepresentation in political advertising or campaign communications.

Note that the misrepresentation rules apply to both political advertising and campaign communications. "Campaign communication" is a broader term than "political advertising."

A "campaign communication" means "a written or oral communication relating to a campaign for nomination or election to public office or office of a political party or to a campaign on a measure."

II. Misrepresentation of Office Title.

A candidate may not represent that he or she holds an office that he or she does not hold at the time of the representation. **If you are not the incumbent in the office you are seeking, you must make it clear that you are seeking election rather than reelection by using the word "for" to clarify that you don't hold that office.** The word "for" must be at least one-half the type size as the name of the office and should appear immediately before the name of the office. For example, a non-incumbent may use the following formats:

**Vote John Doe
for Attorney General**

**John Doe
For
Attorney General**

A non-incumbent may not be allowed to use the following verbiage:

**Elect John Doe
Attorney General**

**John Doe
Attorney General**

III. Misrepresentation of Identity or Source.

A person violates the law if, with intent to injure a candidate or influence the result of an election, the person misrepresents the source of political advertising or a campaign communication or if the person misrepresents his or her own identity or the identity of his or her agent in political advertising or in a campaign communication. (If someone else is doing something for you, that person is your agent.) For example, you may not take out an ad in favor of your opponent that purports to be sponsored by a notoriously unpopular group.

IV. Use of State Seal.

Only current officeholders may use the state seal in political advertising.

V. Criminal Offenses.

Be aware that many violations of the Election Code are criminal offenses. For example, unlawfully using public funds for political advertising can be a Class A misdemeanor. So can misrepresenting one's identity or office title in political advertising. For more details on these offenses and political advertising in general, see [Chapter 255 of the Election Code](#).

STATEMENT & OATH

**Form 2201 - Statement of Officer
(General Information)**

The attached form is designed to meet minimal constitutional filing requirements pursuant to the relevant provisions. *This form and the information provided are not substitutes for the advice and services of an attorney.*

Execution and Delivery Instructions

A Statement of Officer required to be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State is considered filed once it has been received by this office.

Mail: P.O. Box 12887, Austin, Texas 78711-2887.

Overnight mail or hand deliveries: James Earl Rudder Officer Building, 1019 Brazos, Austin, Texas 78701.

Fax: (512) 463-5569.

Email: Scanned copies of the executed Statement may be sent to register@sos.texas.gov

NOTE: *The Statement of Officer form, commonly referred to as the "Anti-Bribery Statement," must be executed and filed with the Office of the Secretary of State before taking the Oath of Office (Form 2204).*

Commentary

Article XVI, section 1 of the Texas Constitution requires all elected or appointed state and local officers to take the official oath of office found in section 1(a) and to subscribe to the anti-bribery statement found in section 1(b) before entering upon the duties of their offices.

Elected and appointed state-level officers required to file the anti-bribery statement with the Office of the Secretary of State include members of the Legislature, the Secretary of State, and all other officers whose jurisdiction is coextensive with the boundaries of the state or who immediately belong to one of the three branches of state government. Questions about whether a particular officer is a state-level officer may be resolved by consulting relevant statutes, constitutional provisions, judicial decisions, and attorney general opinions. For more information, see Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. No. JC-0575 (2002) (determining the meaning of "state officer" as it is used in Article XVI).

Effective September 1, 2017, Senate Bill 1329, which was enacted by the 85th Legislature, Regular Session, amended chapter 602 of the Government Code to require the following judicial officers and judicial appointees to file their oath and statement of officer with the secretary of state:

Officers appointed by the supreme court, the court of criminal appeals, or the State Bar of Texas; and
Associate judges appointed under Subchapter B or C, Chapter 201, Family Code.

Local officers must retain the signed anti-bribery statement with the official records of the office. *As a general rule, city and county officials do not file their oath of office with the Secretary of State—these officials file at the local level. The Legislature amended the Texas Constitution, Article 16, Section 1, in November 2001 to no longer require local level elected officials to file with our office. **The Office of the Secretary of State does NOT file Statements or Oaths from the following persons:*** Assistant District Attorneys; City Officials, including City Clerks, City Council Members, Municipal Judges, Justices of the Peace, and Police/Peace Officers; Zoning/Planning Commission Members; County Officials, including County Clerks, County Commissioners, County Judges, County Tax Assessors, and District Clerks; and Officials of Regional Entities, such as, Appraisal Review Districts, Emergency Service Districts, and School Districts (ISD's).

Questions about this form should be directed to the Government Filings Section at (512) 463-6334 or register@sos.texas.gov

Revised 05/2020

Form #2201 Rev. 05/2020

Submit to:

SECRETARY OF STATE

Government Filings

Section P O Box 12887

Austin, TX 78711-2887

512-463-6334

512-463-5569 - Fax

Filing Fee: None



STATEMENT OF OFFICER

Statement

I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I have not directly or indirectly paid, offered, promised to pay, contributed, or promised to contribute any money or thing of value, or promised any public office or employment for the giving or withholding of a vote at the election at which I was elected or as a reward to secure my appointment or confirmation, whichever the case may be, so help me God.

Title of Position to Which Elected/Appointed: _____

Execution

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing statement and that the facts stated therein are true.

Date: _____

Signature of Officer

**Form 2204 - Oath of Office
(General Information)**

The attached form is designed to meet minimal constitutional filing requirements pursuant to the relevant provisions. *This form and the information provided are not substitutes for the advice and services of an attorney.*

Execution and Delivery Instructions

An Oath of Office that is required to be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State is considered filed once it has been received by this office. The Oath of Office may be administered to you by a person authorized under the provisions of Chapter 602 of the Texas Government Code. Authorized persons commonly used to administer oaths include notaries public and judges.

Mail: P.O. Box 12887, Austin, Texas 78711-2887.

Overnight mail or hand deliveries: James Earl Rudder Officer Building, 1019 Brazos, Austin, Texas 78701.

Fax: (512) 463-5569. If faxed, the original Oath should also be mailed to the appropriate address above.

Email: Scanned copies of the executed Oath may be sent to register@sos.texas.gov. If sent by email, the original Oath should also be mailed to the appropriate address above.

NOTE: Do not have the Oath of Office administered to you before executing and filing the Statement of Officer (Form 2201 – commonly referred to as the “Anti-Bribery Statement”) with the Office of the Secretary of State.

Commentary

Pursuant to art. XVI, Section 1 of the Texas Constitution, the Oath of Office *may not* be taken until a Statement of Officer (see Form 2201) has been subscribed to and, as required, filed with the Office of the Secretary of State. Additionally, gubernatorial appointees who are appointed during a legislative session *may not* execute their Oath until after confirmation by the Senate. Tex. Const. art. IV, Section 12.

Officers Required to File Oath of Office with the Secretary of State:

Gubernatorial appointees

District attorneys

Appellate and district court judges

Officers appointed by the supreme court, the court of criminal appeals, or the State Bar of Texas

Associate judges appointed under subchapter B or C, chapter 201 of the Texas Family Code

Directors of districts operating pursuant to chapter 36 or 49 of the Texas Water Code file a duplicate original of their Oath of Office within 10 days of its execution. Texas Water Code, Sections 36.055(d) and 49.055(d)

Officers Not Required to File Oath of Office with the Secretary of State:

Members of the Legislature elected to a *regular* term of office will have their Oath of Office administered in chambers on the opening day of the session and recorded in the appropriate Journal. Members elected to an *unexpired* term of office should file their Oath of Office with either the Chief Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate, as appropriate.

All other persons should file their Oaths locally. Please check with the county clerk, city secretary or board/commission secretary for the proper filing location.

As a general rule, city and county officials do not file their oath of office with the Secretary of State—these officials file at the local level. The Legislature amended the Texas Constitution, Article 16, Section 1, in November 2001 to no longer require local level elected officials to file with our office.

The Office of the Secretary of State does NOT file Statements or Oaths from the following persons: Assistant District Attorneys; City Officials, including City Clerks, City Council Members, Municipal Judges, Justices of the Peace, and Police/Peace Officers; Zoning/Planning Commission Members; County Officials, including County Clerks, County Commissioners, County Judges (*except County Court of Law Judges who file with the Elections Division*), County Tax Assessors, and District Clerks; and Officials of Regional Entities, such as, Appraisal Review Districts, Emergency Service Districts, and School Districts (ISD's). Questions about whether a particular officer is a state-level officer may be resolved by consulting relevant statutes, constitutional provisions, judicial decisions, and attorney general opinions.

All state or county officers, other than the governor, lieutenant governor, and members of the legislature, who qualify for office, are commissioned by the governor. Tex. Gov't Code, Section 601.005. The Secretary of State performs ministerial duties to administer the commissions issued by the governor, including confirming that officers are qualified prior to being commissioned. Submission of this oath of office to the Office of the Secretary of State confirms an officer's qualification so that the commission may be issued.

Questions about this form should be directed to the Government Filings Section at (512) 463-6334 or register@sos.texas.gov.

Revised 9/2017

Submit to:
SECRETARY OF STATE
Government Filings Section
P O Box 12887
Austin, TX 78711-2887
512-463-6334
FAX 512-463-5569
Filing Fee: None



OATH OF OFFICE

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS,
I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I will faithfully
execute the duties of the office of _____ of
the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws
of the United States and of this State, so help me God.

Signature of Officer

Certification of Person Authorized to Administer Oath

State of _____

County of _____

Sworn to and subscribed before me on this _____ day of _____, 20____.

(Affix Notary Seal,
only if oath
administered by a
notary.)

Signature of Notary Public or
Signature of Other Person Authorized to Administer An
Oath

Printed or Typed Name

POLL WATCHER

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT OF POLL WATCHER BY REGISTERED VOTERS
ON BEHALF OF A WRITE-IN CANDIDATE

To the Presiding Judge/Deputy Early Voting Clerk:

The following person has been appointed to serve as a poll watcher on my behalf:

Name of Poll Watcher	Name of Write-In Candidate
Residence Address of Poll Watcher	Name and Date of Election
Voter Registration VUID Number of Poll Watcher	Precinct or Other Location Poll Watcher is to Serve

I, _____, am the candidate or the person authorized to make this appointment
(printed name of candidate or designee)
on behalf of the candidate and with the candidate's knowledge.

Residence Address/Office Address of signer: _____

Signature of Candidate or Designee (circle one)

Registered Voters Making the Appointment		
Signature of Voter	Residence Address of Voter	VUID# of Voter

Signature of Poll Watcher

OATH OF A POLL WATCHER

The following oath must be repeated aloud by the poll watcher before being accepted for service.
"I swear(or affirm) that I will not disrupt the voting process or harass voters in the discharge of my duties"

AFFIDAVIT OF POLL WATCHER

I, _____, a poll watcher for the above appointing authority, do
(printed name of watcher)
hereby swear or affirm that I do not have in my possession any type of mechanical or electronic means of recording images or sound while serving as a watcher or I will disable or deactivate the device while serving as a watcher.

TRAINING REQUIREMENT

I understand that I must present a physical copy of the Certificate of Completion of the Secretary of State Poll Watcher Training before being accepted for service. [Sec. 33.051, Texas Election Code]

Signature of Poll Watcher

Sworn and subscribed before me this _____ day of _____, _____.

Signature of Election Judge/Deputy

Printed Name of Election Judge/Deputy

INSTRUCTIONS

Registered voters have the authority to appoint a poll watcher on behalf of a write-in candidate whose name appears on the ballot. This type of appointment is made on behalf of a write-in candidate who is not a declared write-in candidate.

A group of registered voters may appoint watchers on behalf of a write-in candidate in an election in which a declaration of write-in candidacy is not required to be filed.

To be eligible to participate in the appointment (under this section) of a watcher for a precinct polling place, a person must be a registered voter of the precinct. If the countywide polling place program is being used, the voters signing the Certificate of Appointment must be registered voters of the county.

To be eligible to participate in the appointment (under this section) of a watcher for an early voting polling place, the meeting place of an early voting ballot board, or a central counting station, a person must be a registered voter of the territory served by that facility.

The minimum number of voters required to make an appointment under this section is the lesser of:

15; or

5% of the registered voters of the appropriate territory as determined from the list of registered voters to be used for the election.

A certificate issued to a watcher appointed for a write-in candidate under Section 33.004 Texas Election Code must:

Include the residence address and voter registration number of eligible signers in the required number;

Include the signed statement of the candidate, or a person who would be authorized to make appointments on the candidate's behalf if the candidate's name appeared on the ballot, that the appointment is made with the signer's consent; and

State the residence or office address of the signer and the capacity in which the signer signs, if the statement is not signed by the candidate.

A watcher appointed to serve at a precinct polling place, must deliver the following materials to the presiding judge at the time the watcher reports for service:

- (1) a certificate of appointment; and
- (2) a certificate of completion from training completed by the watcher under [Section 33.008]

The officer presented with a watcher's certificates shall require the watcher to countersign the certificate of appointment to ensure that the watcher is the same person who signed the certificate of appointment. A watcher who presents himself or herself at the proper time with the required certificates shall be accepted for service unless the person is ineligible to serve or the number of appointees to which the appointing authority is entitled have already been accepted.

A watcher may not be accepted for service if the watcher has possession of a device capable of recording images or sound unless the watcher agrees to disable or deactivate the device. The presiding judge may inquire whether a watcher has possession of any prohibited recording device before accepting the watcher for service.

If a watcher is not accepted for service, the certificates shall be returned to the watcher with a signed statement of the reason for the rejection.

On accepting a watcher for service, the election officer shall provide the watcher with a form of identification, prescribed by the secretary of state, to be displayed by the watcher during the watcher's hours of service at the polling place.

An election officer commits an offense if the officer intentionally or knowingly refuses to accept a watcher for service when acceptance of the watcher is required by this section. An offense under this subsection is a Class A misdemeanor.

Before accepting a watcher, the officer presented with a watcher's certificate of appointment shall require the watcher to take the following oath, administered by the officer: "I swear (or affirm) that I will not disrupt the voting process or harass voters in the discharge of my duties."

ELECTION CODE

TITLE 3. ELECTION OFFICERS AND OBSERVERS

CHAPTER 33. WATCHERS

SUBCHAPTER A. APPOINTMENT

Sec. 33.001. WATCHER DEFINED. In this code, "watcher" means a person appointed under this subchapter to observe the conduct of an election on behalf of a candidate, a political party, or the proponents or opponents of a measure.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 33.0015. CHAPTER PURPOSE AND WATCHER DUTY. The purpose of this chapter is to preserve the integrity of the ballot box in accordance with Section 4, Article VI, Texas Constitution, by providing for the appointment of watchers. It is the intent of the legislature that watchers duly accepted for service under this chapter be allowed to observe and report on irregularities in the conduct of any election, but may not interfere in the orderly conduct of an election. To effect that purpose, a watcher appointed under this chapter shall observe without obstructing the conduct of an election and call to the attention of an election officer any observed or suspected irregularity or violation of law in the conduct of the election.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 4.02, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 33.0016. REFERENCES TO EARLY VOTING BALLOT BOARD IN THIS CHAPTER. A reference in this chapter to an early voting ballot board includes a signature verification committee.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 4.03, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 33.002. APPOINTMENT BY CANDIDATE. (a) Watchers may be appointed by each candidate whose name appears on the ballot or the list of declared write-in candidates in an election for:

(2) an office of a political party.

(c) In an election for an office of the federal government that is filled by voters of more than one county, watchers may also be appointed by the chair or treasurer of the candidate's principal campaign committee or by a designated agent of the chair or treasurer.

Sec. 33.003. APPOINTMENT BY POLITICAL PARTY. (a) The county chair of each political party that has one or more nominees on the ballot may appoint watchers.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, Sec. 33, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 33.004. APPOINTMENT FOR WRITE-IN CANDIDATE. (a) A group of registered voters may appoint watchers on behalf of a write-in candidate in an election in which a declaration of write-in candidacy is not required to be filed.

(b) To be eligible to participate in the appointment under this section of a watcher for a precinct polling place, a person must be a registered voter of the precinct. To be eligible to participate in the appointment under this section of a watcher for an early voting polling place, the meeting place of an early voting ballot board, or a central counting station, a person must be a registered voter of the territory served by that facility.

(c) The minimum number of voters required to make an appointment under this section is the lesser of:

(1) 15; or

(2) five percent of the registered voters of the appropriate territory as determined from the list of registered voters to be used for

the election.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 203, Sec. 2.38; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 554, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1349, Sec. 16, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 33.005. APPOINTMENT FOR ELECTION ON MEASURE. (a) In an election on a measure, watchers may be appointed by the campaign treasurer or an assistant campaign treasurer of a specific-purpose political committee that supports or opposes the measure.

(b) This section does not apply to a referendum measure submitted at a primary election.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 33.006. CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT. (a) For an appointment of a watcher to be effective, the appointing authority must issue a certificate of appointment to the appointee.

(b) A certificate of appointment must:

(1) be in writing and signed by the appointing authority or, for an appointment for a write-in candidate under Section 33.004, by each of the voters making the appointment;

(2) indicate the capacity in which the appointing authority is acting;

(3) state the name, residence address, and voter registration number of the appointee and be signed by the appointee;

(4) identify the election and the precinct polling place or other location at which the appointee is to serve;

(5) in an election on a measure, identify the measure if more than one is to be voted on and state which side of the measure the appointee represents; and

(6) contain an affidavit executed by the appointee stating that the appointee will not have possession of a device capable of recording images or sound or that the appointee will disable or deactivate the device while serving as a watcher.

(c) In addition to complying with Subsection (b), a certificate issued to a watcher appointed for a write-in candidate under Section 33.004 must:

(1) include the residence address and voter registration number of eligible signers in the required number;

(2) include the signed statement of the candidate, or a person who would be authorized to make appointments on the candidate's behalf if the candidate's name appeared on the ballot, that the appointment is made with the signer's consent; and

(3) state the residence or office address of the signer under Subdivision (2) and the capacity in which the signer signs, if the statement is not signed by the candidate.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 498, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 728, Sec. 8, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, Sec. 34, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1349, Sec. 17, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1164 (H.B. 2817), Sec. 11, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 33.007. NUMBER AND PLACE OF SERVICE OF WATCHERS. (a) Each appointing authority may appoint not more than two watchers for each precinct polling place, meeting place for an early voting ballot board, or central counting station involved in the election.

(b) Each appointing authority may appoint not more than seven watchers for each main or branch early voting polling place involved in the election. Not more than two watchers appointed by the same authority may be on duty at the same early voting polling place at the same time.

(c) In an election in which the election officers serving at a precinct polling place also serve as an early voting ballot board, a watcher who is appointed for the precinct polling place may observe the processing of early voting ballots by the early voting ballot board, or separate watchers may be appointed to observe only that activity.

(d) The number of watchers accepted for service on each side of a measure may not exceed the number authorized by this section. If the number of appointments exceeds the authorized number, the authority accepting the watchers for service shall accept the watchers in the order in which they present their certificates of appointment.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 203, Sec. 2.39; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 554, Sec.

10, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Sec. 33.008. TRAINING PROGRAM. The secretary of state shall develop and maintain a training program for watchers. The training program must:

(1) be available:

(A) entirely via the Internet; and

(B) at any time, without a requirement for prior registration; and

(2) provide a watcher who completes the training with a certificate of completion.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 4.04, eff. December 2, 2021.

SUBCHAPTER B. ELIGIBILITY

Sec. 33.031. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS. (a) To be eligible to serve as a watcher, a person must be a qualified voter:

(1) of the county in which the person is to serve, in an election ordered by the governor or a county authority or in a primary election;

(2) of the part of the county in which the election is held, in an election ordered by the governor or a county authority that does not cover the entire county of the person's residence; and

(3) of the political subdivision, in an election ordered by an authority of a political subdivision other than a county.

(b) In addition to the requirements of Subsection (a), to be eligible to serve as a watcher, a person must complete training under Section 33.008.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1235 (S.B. 1970), Sec. 26(3), eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 4.05, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 33.032. INELIGIBILITY OF CANDIDATE FOR PUBLIC OFFICE. (a) A person is ineligible to serve as a watcher in an election if the person is a candidate for a public office in an election to be held on the same day.

(b) In this section, "candidate" means a person who has taken affirmative action, as described by the law regulating political funds and campaigns, for the purpose of gaining nomination or election.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 33.033. INELIGIBILITY OF EMPLOYEE OR RELATIVE OF ELECTION OFFICER. (a) A person is ineligible to serve as a watcher at a particular location if the person is the employer of or is employed by or related within the second degree by consanguinity or affinity, as determined under Chapter 573, Government Code, to an election judge, an election clerk, an early voting clerk, or a deputy clerk serving at that location.

(b) For purposes of this section, a person is employed by an election officer in the same circumstances that a person is employed by a candidate under Section 32.054(b).

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 203, Sec. 2.40; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 554, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 561, Sec. 16, eff. Aug. 26, 1991; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 5.95(27), eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 33.034. INELIGIBILITY OF PUBLIC OFFICER. (a) A person who holds an elective public office is ineligible to serve as a watcher in an election.

(b) For purposes of this section, a deputy or assistant serving under a public officer does not hold a public office.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 33.035. INELIGIBILITY OF PERSON CONVICTED OF ELECTION OFFENSE. A person is ineligible to serve as a watcher in an election if the person has been finally convicted of an offense in connection with conduct directly attributable to an election.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1349, Sec. 18, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

SUBCHAPTER C. SERVICE

Sec. 33.051. ACCEPTANCE OF WATCHER. (a) A watcher appointed to serve at a precinct polling place, a meeting place for an early voting ballot board, or a central counting station must deliver the following

materials to the presiding judge at the time the watcher reports for service:

(1) a certificate of appointment; and

(2) a certificate of completion from training completed by the watcher under Section 33.008.

(a-1) A watcher appointed to serve at an early voting polling place must deliver the certificates under Subsection (a) to the early voting clerk or deputy clerk in charge of the polling place when the watcher first reports for service.

(b) The officer presented with a watcher's certificates shall require the watcher to countersign the certificate of appointment to ensure that the watcher is the same person who signed the certificate of appointment. Except as provided by Subsection (c), a watcher who presents himself or herself at the proper time with the certificates required under Subsection (a) shall be accepted for service unless the person is ineligible to serve or the number of appointees to which the appointing authority is entitled have already been accepted.

(c) A watcher may not be accepted for service if the watcher has possession of a device capable of recording images or sound unless the watcher agrees to disable or deactivate the device. The presiding judge may inquire whether a watcher has possession of any prohibited recording device before accepting the watcher for service.

(d) The certificates of a watcher serving at an early voting polling place shall be retained at the polling place until voting at the polling place is concluded. At each subsequent time that the watcher reports for service, the watcher shall inform the clerk or deputy in charge. The officer may require the watcher to sign the watcher's name in the officer's presence, for comparison with the signature on the certificate of appointment, if the officer is uncertain of the watcher's identity.

(e) If a watcher is not accepted for service, the certificates shall be returned to the watcher with a signed statement of the reason for the rejection.

(f) On accepting a watcher for service, the election officer shall provide the watcher with a form of identification, prescribed by the secretary of state, to be displayed by the watcher during the watcher's hours of service at the polling place.

(g) An election officer commits an offense if the officer intentionally or knowingly refuses to accept a watcher for service when acceptance of the watcher is required by this section. An offense under this subsection is a Class A misdemeanor.

(h) Before accepting a watcher, the officer presented with a watcher's certificate of appointment shall require the watcher to take the following oath, administered by the officer: "I swear (or affirm) that I will not disrupt the voting process or harass voters in the discharge of my duties."

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 498, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 203, Sec. 2.41; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 554, Sec. 12, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 728, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, Sec. 35, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1164 (H.B. 2817), Sec. 12, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 188 (S.B. 160), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 4.06, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 33.052. HOURS OF SERVICE AT PRECINCT POLLING PLACE. A watcher at a precinct polling place may begin service at any time after the presiding judge arrives at the polling place on election day and may remain at the polling place until the presiding judge and the clerks complete their duties there. A watcher may serve at the polling place during the hours the watcher chooses, except that if the watcher is present at the polling place when ballots are counted, the watcher may not leave until the counting is complete.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 472, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, Sec. 36, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 254, Sec. 1, 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 697 (H.B. 1921), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 87 (S.B. 1969), Sec. 27.002(2), eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 414 (H.B. 1631), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 33.053. HOURS OF SERVICE AT EARLY VOTING POLLING PLACE. A watcher serving at an early voting polling place may be present at the polling place at any time it is open and until completion of the securing of any voting equipment used at the polling place that is required to be secured on the close of voting each day. The watcher may serve during the hours the watcher chooses.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 203, Sec. 2.42; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 554, Sec. 13, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, Sec. 37, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 33.054. HOURS OF SERVICE AT EARLY VOTING BALLOT BOARD MEETING OR SIGNATURE VERIFICATION COMMITTEE MEETING. (a) A watcher serving at the meeting place of an early voting ballot board or signature verification committee may be present at any time the board or committee is processing or counting ballots and until the board or committee completes its duties. The watcher may serve during the hours the watcher chooses, except as provided by Subsection (b).

(b) A watcher serving at the meeting place of an early voting ballot board may not leave during voting hours on election day without the presiding judge's permission if the board has recorded any votes cast on voting machines or counted any ballots, unless the board has completed its duties and has been dismissed by the presiding judge.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 203, Sec. 2.43; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 554, Sec. 14, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, Sec. 38, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 711 (H.B. 3107), Sec. 36, eff. September 1, 2021.

Sec. 33.055. HOURS OF SERVICE AT CENTRAL COUNTING STATION. (a) A watcher serving at a central counting station may be present at any time the station is open for the purpose of processing or preparing to process election results and until the election officers complete their duties at the station. The watcher may serve during the hours the watcher chooses, except as provided by Subsection (b).

(b) A watcher may not leave during voting hours on election day without the presiding judge's permission if the counting of ballots at the central counting station has begun.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, Sec. 39, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 33.056. OBSERVING ACTIVITY GENERALLY. (a) Except as provided by Section 33.057, a watcher is entitled to observe any activity conducted at the location at which the watcher is serving. A watcher is entitled to sit or stand near enough to see and hear the election officers conducting the observed activity, except as otherwise prohibited by this chapter.

(b) A watcher is entitled to sit or stand near enough to the member of a counting team who is announcing the votes to verify that the ballots are read correctly or to a member who is tallying the votes to verify that they are tallied correctly.

(c) A watcher is entitled to inspect the returns and other records prepared by the election officers at the location at which the watcher is serving.

(d) A watcher may not be prohibited from making written notes while on duty. Before permitting a watcher who made written notes at a precinct polling place to leave while the polls are open, the presiding officer may require the watcher to leave the notes with another person on duty at the polling place, selected by the watcher, for retention until the watcher returns to duty.

(e) Except as provided by Section 33.057(b), a watcher may not be denied free movement where election activity is occurring within the location at which the watcher is serving.

(f) In this code, a watcher who is entitled to "observe" an election activity is entitled to sit or stand near enough to see and hear the activity.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 4.07, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 33.057. OBSERVING PREPARATION OF VOTER'S BALLOT. (a) A watcher is entitled to be present at the voting station when a voter is being assisted by an election officer, and the watcher is entitled to examine the

ballot before it is deposited in the ballot box to determine whether it is prepared in accordance with the voter's wishes.

(b) A watcher may not be present at the voting station when a voter is preparing the voter's ballot or is being assisted by a person of the voter's choice.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, Sec. 40, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 33.058. RESTRICTIONS ON WATCHER'S ACTIVITIES. (a) While on duty, a watcher may not:

(1) converse with an election officer regarding the election, except to call attention to an irregularity or violation of law;

(2) converse with a voter; or

(3) communicate in any manner with a voter regarding the election.

(b) A watcher may call the attention of an election officer to any occurrence that the watcher believes to be an irregularity or violation of law and may discuss the matter with the officer. An officer may refer the watcher to the presiding officer at any point in the discussion. In that case, the watcher may not discuss the occurrence further with the subordinate officer unless the presiding officer invites the discussion.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 33.059. OBSERVING SECURING OF VOTING SYSTEM EQUIPMENT BEFORE ELECTION. (a) A watcher appointed to serve at a polling place in an election using voting system equipment that is required to be delivered to the polling place in a secured condition is entitled to observe the inspection and securing of the equipment in the jurisdiction of the authority responsible for distributing election supplies to the polling place at which the watcher is appointed to serve.

(b) On request of a watcher, the authority responsible for distributing the election supplies shall inform the watcher of the place, date, and hour of the inspection. A watcher shall be admitted on presentation of a certificate of appointment. The person admitting the watcher shall return the certificate to the watcher.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 33.060. OBSERVING DELIVERY OF ELECTION RECORDS. (a) On request of a watcher, an election officer who delivers election records from a precinct polling place, an early voting polling place, a meeting place for an early voting ballot board, or a central counting station shall permit the watcher appointed to serve at that location to accompany the officer in making the delivery.

(b) If delivery is made in a vehicle, an election officer complies with this section if the officer permits the watcher to follow in a different vehicle and drives in a manner that enables the watcher to keep the vehicle in sight.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 203, Sec. 2.44; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 554, Sec. 15, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Sec. 33.0605. OBSERVING DATA STORAGE SEALING AND TRANSFER. (a) A watcher appointed to serve at a polling place in an election who is available at the time of the action may observe all election activities relating to closing the polling place, including the sealing and transfer of a memory card, flash drive, hard drive, data storage device, or other medium now existing or later developed used by the voting system equipment.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this code, a watcher duly accepted for service at a polling location is entitled to follow the transfer of election materials from the polling place at which the watcher was accepted to a regional tabulating center, the central counting station, or any other location designated to process election materials. The authority responsible for administering a regional tabulating center or another location where election materials are processed must accept duly appointed watchers for service in the same manner a watcher is accepted for service under Section 33.051 and must accept the same number of watchers that may serve under Section 33.007(a).

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 4.08, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 33.061. UNLAWFULLY OBSTRUCTING WATCHER. (a) A person commits an offense if the person serves in an official capacity at a location at which the presence of watchers is authorized and knowingly prevents a watcher from observing an activity or procedure the person knows the watcher is entitled to observe, including by taking any action to obstruct

the view of a watcher or distance the watcher from the activity or procedure to be observed in a manner that would make observation not reasonably effective.

(b) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 4.09, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 33.063. RELIEF. The appointing authority for a watcher who believes that the watcher was unlawfully prevented or obstructed from the performance of the watcher's duties may seek:

- (1) injunctive relief under Section 273.081, including issuance of temporary orders;
- (2) a writ of mandamus under Section 161.009 or 273.061; and
- (3) any other remedy available under law.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 4.10, eff. December 2, 2021.

CAMPAIGN TREASURER

APPOINTMENT OF A CAMPAIGN TREASURER BY A CANDIDATE

FORM CTA
PG 1

See CTA Instruction Guide for detailed instructions.		1 Total pages filed:	
2 CANDIDATE NAME	MS / MRS / MR FIRST MI	OFFICE USE ONLY	
	NICKNAME LAST SUFFIX		
3 CANDIDATE MAILING ADDRESS	ADDRESS / PO BOX; APT / SUITE #; CITY; STATE; ZIP CODE	Filer ID #	
		Date Received	
4 CANDIDATE PHONE	AREA CODE PHONE NUMBER EXTENSION ()	Date Hand-delivered or Postmarked	
		Receipt # Amount \$	
5 OFFICE HELD (if any)		Date Processed	
6 OFFICE SOUGHT (if known)		Date Imaged	
7 CAMPAIGN TREASURER NAME	MS/MRS/MR FIRST MI NICKNAME LAST SUFFIX		
8 CAMPAIGN TREASURER STREET ADDRESS (residence or business)	STREET ADDRESS; APT / SUITE #; CITY; STATE; ZIP CODE		
9 CAMPAIGN TREASURER PHONE	AREA CODE PHONE NUMBER EXTENSION ()		
10 CANDIDATE SIGNATURE	<p>I am aware of the Nepotism Law, Chapter 573 of the Texas Government Code.</p> <p>I am aware of my responsibility to file timely reports as required by title 15 of the Election Code.</p> <p>I am aware of the restrictions in title 15 of the Election Code on contributions from corporations and labor organizations.</p> <p>_____ Signature of Candidate</p> <p>_____ Date Signed</p>		

GO TO PAGE 2

CANDIDATE MODIFIED REPORTING DECLARATION

FORM CTA
PG 2

11 CANDIDATE
NAME

12 MODIFIED
REPORTING
DECLARATION

COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOU ARE CHOOSING MODIFIED REPORTING

**-- This declaration must be filed no later than the 30th day before
the first election to which the declaration applies. --**

-- The modified reporting option is valid for one election cycle only. --
(An election cycle includes a primary election, a general election, and any related runoffs.)

**-- Candidates for the office of state chair of a political party
may NOT choose modified reporting. --**

I do not intend to accept more than \$1,080 in political contributions or
make more than \$1,080 in political expenditures (excluding filing
fees) in connection with any future election within the election
cycle. I understand that if either one of those limits is exceeded, I
will be required to file pre-election reports and, if necessary, a
runoff report.

Year of election(s) or election cycle to
which declaration applies

Signature of Candidate

This appointment is effective on the date it is filed with the appropriate filing authority.

TEC Filers may send this form to the TEC electronically at treasappoint@ethics.state.tx.us
or mail to
Texas Ethics Commission
P.O. Box 12070
Austin, TX 78711-2070

Non-TEC Filers must file this form with the local filing authority
DO NOT SEND TO TEC

For more information about where to file go to:
<https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/filinginfo/QuickFileAReport.php>

FORM C/OH

INSTRUCTION GUIDE

TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION

APPOINTMENT OF A CAMPAIGN TREASURER
BY A CANDIDATE

FORM CTA--INSTRUCTION GUIDE



Revised January 1, 2024

Texas Ethics Commission, P.O. Box 12070, Austin, Texas 78711

www.ethics.state.tx.us

(512) 463-5800 • TDD (800) 735-2989

Promoting Public Confidence in Government

FORM CTA—INSTRUCTION GUIDE

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APPOINTMENT OF A CAMPAIGN TREASURER BY A CANDIDATE

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

These instructions are for the APPOINTMENT OF A CAMPAIGN TREASURER BY A CANDIDATE (Form CTA). Use Form CTA only for appointing your campaign treasurer. Use the AMENDMENT (Form ACTA) for changing information previously reported on Form CTA and for renewing your choice to report under the modified schedule. Note: Candidates for most judicial offices use Form JCTA to file a campaign treasurer appointment.

DUTIES OF A CANDIDATE OR OFFICEHOLDER

As a candidate or officeholder, you alone, not the campaign treasurer, are responsible for filing this form and all candidate/officeholder reports of contributions, expenditures, and loans. Failing to file a report on time or filing an incomplete report may subject you to criminal or civil penalties.

QUALIFICATIONS OF CAMPAIGN TREASURER

A person is ineligible for appointment as a campaign treasurer if the person is the campaign treasurer of a political committee that has outstanding filing obligations (including outstanding penalties). This prohibition does not apply if the committee in connection with which the ineligibility arose has not accepted more than \$5,000 in political contributions or made more than \$5,000 in political expenditures in any semiannual reporting period. A person who violates this prohibition is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed three times the amount of political contributions accepted or political expenditures made in violation of this provision. Note: A candidate may appoint himself or herself as his or her own campaign treasurer.

DUTIES OF A CAMPAIGN TREASURER

State law does not impose any obligations on a candidate's campaign treasurer.

REQUIREMENT TO FILE BEFORE BEGINNING A CAMPAIGN

If you plan to run for a public office in Texas (except for a federal office), you must file this form when you become a candidate even if you do not intend to accept campaign contributions or make campaign expenditures. A "candidate" is a person who knowingly and willingly takes affirmative action for the purpose of gaining nomination or election to public office or for the purpose of satisfying financial obligations incurred by the person in connection with the campaign for nomination or election. Examples of affirmative action include:

- (A) the filing of a campaign treasurer appointment, except that the filing does not constitute candidacy or an announcement of candidacy for purposes of the automatic resignation provisions of Article XVI, Section 65, or Article XI, Section 11, of the Texas Constitution;
- (B) the filing of an application for a place on the ballot;

- (C) the filing of an application for nomination by convention;
- (D) the filing of a declaration of intent to become an independent candidate or a declaration of write-in candidacy;
- (E) the making of a public announcement of a definite intent to run for public office in a particular election, regardless of whether the specific office is mentioned in the announcement;
- (F) before a public announcement of intent, the making of a statement of definite intent to run for public office and the soliciting of support by letter or other mode of communication;
- (G) the soliciting or accepting of a campaign contribution or the making of a campaign expenditure; and
- (H) the seeking of the nomination of an executive committee of a political party to fill a vacancy.

Additionally, the law provides that you must file this form before you may accept a campaign contribution or make or authorize a campaign expenditure, including an expenditure from your personal funds. A filing fee paid to a filing authority to qualify for a place on a ballot is a campaign expenditure that may not be made before filing a campaign treasurer appointment form with the proper filing authority.

If you are an officeholder, you may make officeholder expenditures and accept officeholder contributions without having a campaign treasurer appointment on file. If you do not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file and you wish to accept *campaign* contributions or make *campaign* expenditures in connection with your office or for a different office, you must file this form before doing so. In such a case, a sworn report of contributions, expenditures, and loans will be due no later than the 15th day after filing this form.

WHERE TO FILE A CAMPAIGN TREASURER APPOINTMENT

The appropriate filing authority depends on the office sought or held.

a. Texas Ethics Commission. The Texas Ethics Commission (Commission) is the appropriate filing authority for the Secretary of State and for candidates for or holders of the following offices:

- Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Comptroller, Treasurer, Land Commissioner, Agriculture Commissioner, Railroad Commissioner.
- State Senator or State Representative.
- Supreme Court Justice, Court of Criminal Appeals Judge, and Court of Appeals Judge.*

- State Board of Education.
- A multi-county district judge* or multi-county district attorney.
- A single-county district judge.*
- An office of a political subdivision other than a county if the political subdivision includes areas in more than one county and if the governing body of the political subdivision has not been formed.
- A chair of the state executive committee of a political party with a nominee on the ballot in the most recent gubernatorial election.
- A county chair of a political party with a nominee on the ballot in the most recent gubernatorial election if the county has a population of 350,000 or more.

* Judicial candidates use FORM JCTA to appoint a campaign treasurer.

b. County Clerk. The county clerk (or the county elections administrator or tax assessor, as applicable) is the appropriate local filing authority for a candidate for:

- A county office.
- A precinct office.
- A district office (except for multi-county district offices).
- An office of a political subdivision other than a county if the political subdivision is within the boundaries of a single county and if the governing body of the political subdivision has not been formed.

c. Local Filing Authority. If a candidate is seeking an office of a political subdivision other than a county, the appropriate filing authority is the *clerk or secretary of the governing body* of the political subdivision. If the political subdivision has no clerk or secretary, the appropriate filing authority is the governing body's presiding officer. Basically, any political subdivision that is authorized by the laws of this state to hold an election is considered a local filing authority. Examples are cities, school districts, and municipal utility districts.

FILING WITH A DIFFERENT AUTHORITY

If you have a campaign treasurer appointment on file with one authority, and you wish to accept campaign contributions or make or authorize campaign expenditures in connection with another office that would require filing with a different authority, you must file a new campaign treasurer appointment and a copy of your old campaign treasurer appointment (certified by the old authority) with the new filing authority before beginning your campaign. You should also provide written notice to the original filing authority that your future reports will be filed with another authority; use Form CTA-T for this purpose.

FORMING A POLITICAL COMMITTEE

As a candidate, you must file an APPOINTMENT OF A CAMPAIGN TREASURER BY A CANDIDATE (FORM CTA). You may also form a specific-purpose committee to support your candidacy. Remember that filing a campaign treasurer appointment for a political committee does not eliminate the requirement that a candidate file his or her own campaign treasurer appointment (FORM CTA) and the related reports.

NOTE: *See the Campaign Finance Guide for Political Committees for further information about specific-purpose committees.*

CHANGING A CAMPAIGN TREASURER

If you wish to change your campaign treasurer, simply file an amended campaign treasurer appointment (FORM ACTA). This will automatically terminate the outgoing campaign treasurer appointment.

AMENDING A CAMPAIGN TREASURER APPOINTMENT

If *any* of the information reported on the campaign treasurer appointment (FORM CTA) changes, file an AMENDMENT: APPOINTMENT OF A CAMPAIGN TREASURER BY A CANDIDATE (FORM ACTA) to report the change.

REPORTING REQUIREMENT FOR CERTAIN OFFICEHOLDERS

If you are an officeholder who appoints a campaign treasurer after a period of not having one, you must file a report of contributions, expenditures, and loans no later than the 15th day after your appointment is effective. This requirement is not applicable if you are a candidate or an officeholder who is merely changing campaign treasurers.

TERMINATING A CAMPAIGN TREASURER APPOINTMENT

You may terminate your campaign treasurer appointment at any time by:

- 1) filing a campaign treasurer appointment for a successor campaign treasurer, or
- 2) filing a final report.

Remember that you may not accept any campaign contributions or make or authorize any campaign expenditures without a campaign treasurer appointment on file. You may, however, accept officeholder contributions and make or authorize officeholder expenditures.

If your campaign treasurer quits, he or she must give written notice to both you and your filing authority. The termination will be effective on the date you receive the notice or on the date your filing authority receives the notice, whichever is later.

FILING A FINAL REPORT

For filing purposes, you are a “candidate” as long as you have an appointment of campaign treasurer on file. If you do not expect to accept any further campaign contributions or to make any further campaign expenditures, you may file a final report of contributions and expenditures. A final report terminates your appointment of campaign treasurer and relieves you of the obligation of filing further reports as a candidate. If you have surplus funds, or if you retain assets purchased with political funds, you will be required to file annual reports. (*See instructions for FORM C/OH - UC.*) If you are an officeholder at the time of filing a final report, you may be required to file semiannual reports of contributions, expenditures, and loans as an officeholder.

If you do not have an appointment of campaign treasurer on file, you may not accept *campaign* contributions or make *campaign* expenditures. A payment on a campaign debt is a campaign expenditure. An officeholder who does not have an appointment of campaign treasurer on file may accept *officeholder* contributions and make *officeholder* expenditures.

To file a final report, you must complete the CANDIDATE/OFFICEHOLDER CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORT (FORM C/OH), check the “final” box on Page 1, Section 9, and complete and attach the DESIGNATION OF FINAL REPORT (FORM C/OH-FR).

ELECTRONIC FILING

All persons filing campaign finance reports with the Commission are required to file those reports electronically unless the person is entitled to claim an exemption. Please check the Commission’s website at <http://www.ethics.state.tx.us> for information about exemptions from the electronic filing requirements.

GUIDES

All candidates should review the applicable Commission’s campaign finance guide. Guides are available on the Commission’s website at <http://www.ethics.state.tx.us>.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

Each numbered item in these instructions corresponds to the same numbered item on the form.

PAGE 1

- 1. TOTAL PAGES FILED:** After you have completed the form, enter the total number of pages of this form and any additional pages. A “page” is one side of a two-sided form. If you are not using a two-sided form, a “page” is a single sheet.
- 2. CANDIDATE NAME:** Enter your full name, including nicknames and suffixes (e.g., Sr., Jr., III), if applicable. Enter your name in the same way on Page 2, Section 11, of this form.
- 3. CANDIDATE MAILING ADDRESS:** Enter your complete mailing address, including zip code. This information will allow your filing authority to correspond with you. If this information changes, please notify your filing authority immediately.

4. **CANDIDATE PHONE:** Enter your phone number, including the area code and extension, if applicable.
5. **OFFICE HELD:** If you are an officeholder, please enter the office you currently hold. Include the district, precinct, or other designation for the office, if applicable.
6. **OFFICE SOUGHT:** If you are a candidate, please enter the office you seek, if known. Include the district, precinct, or other designation for the office, if applicable.
7. **CAMPAIGN TREASURER NAME:** Enter the full name of your campaign treasurer, including nicknames and suffixes (e.g., Sr., Jr., III), if applicable.
8. **CAMPAIGN TREASURER STREET ADDRESS:** Enter the complete street address of your campaign treasurer, including the zip code. You may enter either the treasurer's business or residential street address. If you are your own treasurer, you may enter either your business or residential street address.
9. **CAMPAIGN TREASURER PHONE:** Enter the phone number of your campaign treasurer, including the area code and extension, if applicable.
10. **CANDIDATE SIGNATURE:** Enter your signature after reading the summary. Your signature here indicates that you have read the following summary of the nepotism law; that you are aware of your responsibility to file timely reports; and that you are aware of the restrictions on contributions from corporations and labor organizations.

- The Texas nepotism law (Government Code, chapter 573) imposes certain restrictions on both officeholders and candidates. You should consult the statute in regard to the restrictions applicable to officeholders.
- A candidate may not take an affirmative action to influence an employee of the office to which the candidate seeks election in regard to the appointment, confirmation, employment or employment conditions of an individual who is related to the candidate within a prohibited degree.
- A candidate for a multi-member governmental body may not take an affirmative action to influence an officer or employee of the governmental body to which the candidate seeks election in regard to the appointment, confirmation, or employment of an individual related to the candidate in a prohibited degree.
- Two people are related within a prohibited degree if they are related within the third degree by consanguinity (blood) or the second degree by affinity (marriage). The degree of consanguinity is determined by the number of generations that separate them. If neither is descended from the other, the degree of consanguinity is determined by adding the number of generations that each is separated from a common ancestor. Examples: (1) first degree - parent to child; (2) second degree - grandparent to grandchild; or brother to sister; (3) third degree - great-grandparent to great-grandchild; or aunt to niece who is child of individual's brother or sister. A husband and wife are related in the first degree by affinity. A wife has the same degree of relationship by affinity to her husband's relatives as her husband has by

consanguinity. For example, a wife is related to her husband's grandmother in the second degree by affinity.

PAGE 2

11. CANDIDATE NAME: Enter your name as you did on Page 1.

12. MODIFIED REPORTING DECLARATION: Sign this option if you wish to report under the modified reporting schedule.

The modified reporting option is not available for candidates for the office of state chair of a political party and candidates for county chair of a political party.

To the left of your signature, enter the year of the election or election cycle to which your selection of modified reporting applies.

Your selection of modified reporting is valid for an entire election cycle. For example, if you choose modified reporting before a primary election, your selection remains in effect for any runoff and for the general election and any related runoff. You must make this selection at least 30 days before the first election to which your selection applies.

An opposed candidate in an election is eligible to report under the modified reporting schedule if he or she does not intend to accept more than \$1,080 in political contributions or make more than \$1,080 in political expenditures in connection with an election. The amount of a filing fee paid to qualify for a place on the ballot does not count against the \$1,080 expenditure limit. An opposed candidate who reports under the modified schedule is not required to file pre-election reports (due 30 days and 8 days before an election) or runoff reports (due 8 days before a runoff). (Note: An *unopposed* candidate is not required to file pre-election reports in the first place.) The obligations to file semiannual reports, special pre-election reports (formerly known as telegram reports), or special session reports, if applicable, are not affected by selecting the modified schedule.

The \$1,080 maximums apply to each election within the cycle. In other words, you are limited to \$1,080 in contributions and expenditures in connection with the primary, an additional \$1,080 in contributions and expenditures in connection with the general election, and an additional \$1,080 in contributions and expenditures in connection with a runoff.

EXCEEDING \$1,080 IN CONTRIBUTIONS OR EXPENDITURES. If you exceed \$1,080 in contributions or expenditures in connection with an election, you must file according to the regular filing schedule. In other words, you must file pre-election reports and a runoff report, if you are in a runoff.

If you exceed either of the \$1,080 limits *after the 30th day before the election*, you must file a sworn report of contributions and expenditures within 48 hours after exceeding the limit. After that, you must file any pre-election reports or runoff reports that are due under the regular filing schedule.

Your selection is not valid for other elections or election cycles. Use the AMENDMENT (FORM ACTA) to renew your option to file under the modified schedule for a different election year or election cycle.

For more information, see the Commission's campaign finance guide that applies to you.

FINANCE REPORTS

REPORTING DATES FOR CANDIDATES/OFFICEHOLDER FINANCE REPORTS

Note: These campaign Finance reports must be filed no later than 5:00 p.m. in the City Secretary's Office (on the date they are due). The address is: City Hall, 24 Lee Kitchens Drive, Ransom Canyon, Texas

Semi-Annual Report

January 17, 2024 All local candidates who had a campaign treasurer on file as of December 31, 2023

30th Day Out

April 4, 2024 Due date for filing first Report of Campaign Contributions and Expenditures by opposed candidates and Specific-Purpose Committees supporting or opposing opposed candidates

8th Day Out

April 26, 2024 Due date for filing second Report of Campaign Contributions and Expenditures

Semi-Annual Report

July 15, 2024 Last day for timely filing of Semi-Annual Report of Contributions and Expenditures

**** See Texas Ethics Commission 2024 Filing Schedule (attached in this packet)**



TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION
2024 FILING SCHEDULE FOR REPORTS DUE IN CONNECTION WITH
ELECTIONS HELD ON UNIFORM ELECTION DATES

This is a filing schedule for reports to be filed in connection with elections held on uniform election dates in May and November. Examples of elections held on uniform election dates are elections for school board positions and city offices. The uniform election dates in 2024 are May 4 and November 5.

Candidates and officeholders must file semiannual reports (due on January 16, 2024, and July 15, 2024). In addition, a candidate who has an opponent on the ballot in an election held on a uniform election date must file two pre-election reports (unless the candidate has elected modified reporting).

The campaign treasurer of a political committee that is involved in an election held on a uniform election date must also file pre-election reports (unless the committee is a general-purpose political committee that files monthly or a specific-purpose political committee that files on the modified reporting schedule). This schedule sets out the due dates for pre-election reports in connection with elections on uniform election dates. Please consult the 2024 REGULAR FILING SCHEDULE FOR GENERAL-PURPOSE POLITICAL COMMITTEES (GPAC), COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES (CEC), AND SPECIFIC-PURPOSE POLITICAL COMMITTEES (SPAC) for a complete listing of political committee deadlines.

Candidates for and officeholders in local offices regularly filled at the general election for state and county officers (the November election in even-numbered years) should use the 2024 FILING SCHEDULE FOR CANDIDATES AND OFFICEHOLDERS FILING WITH THE COUNTY CLERK OR ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR.

EXPLANATION OF THE FILING SCHEDULE CHART

COLUMN I: REPORT DUE DATE - This is the date by which the report must be filed. If the due date for a report falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the report is due on the next regular business day. This schedule shows the extended deadline where applicable. A report transmitted to the Texas Ethics Commission over the Internet is considered timely filed if it is transmitted *by midnight, Central Time Zone, on the night of the filing deadline*. For most filing deadlines, a report filed on paper is considered timely filed if it is deposited with the U.S. Post Office or a common or contract carrier properly addressed with postage and handling charges prepaid, or hand-delivered to the filing authority by the filing deadline. **Pre-Election Reports:** A report due 30 days before an election and a report due 8 days before an election must be *received* by the appropriate filing authority no later than the report due date to be considered timely filed.

COLUMN II: TYPE OF REPORT (WHO FILES) - This column gives the report type and explains which reporting form to use and which filers are required to file the report.

COLUMN III: BEGINNING DATE OF PERIOD COVERED - This column sets out the beginning date of the time period covered by the report. Use the latest one of the applicable dates. The "date of campaign treasurer appointment" is the beginning date only for the *first* report filed after filing a campaign treasurer appointment. For officeholders recently appointed to an elective office, the beginning date for the first report will be the date the officeholder took office, provided that he or she was not already filing as an officeholder or candidate at the time of the appointment. (**NOTE:** If you are ever confused about the beginning date for a required report, remember this rule: **There should never be gaps between reporting periods and, generally, there should not be overlaps.**)

COLUMN IV: ENDING DATE OF PERIOD COVERED - This column sets out the ending date of the time period covered by the report. The report must include reportable activity occurring on the ending date.

Please consult the CAMPAIGN FINANCE GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES AND OFFICEHOLDERS WHO FILE WITH LOCAL FILING AUTHORITIES or the CAMPAIGN FINANCE GUIDE FOR POLITICAL COMMITTEES for further information.

<u>COLUMN I</u> DUE DATE	<u>COLUMN II</u> TYPE OF REPORT (WHO FILES)	<u>COLUMN III</u> BEGINNING DATE OF PERIOD COVERED	<u>COLUMN IV</u> ENDING DATE OF PERIOD COVERED
Tuesday, January 16, 2024 <i>Deadline is extended because of holiday.</i>	January semiannual [FORM C/OH] (all local candidates and officeholders, except for officeholders who do not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file and who do not exceed \$1,010 in contributions or expenditures for the reporting period) [FORM GPAC] (all GPACs) [FORM SPAC] (all SPACs)	July 1, 2023, <u>or</u> the date of campaign treasurer appointment, <u>or</u> the day after the date the last report ended.	December 31, 2023
Tuesday, January 16, 2024 <i>Deadline is extended because of holiday.</i>	Annual report of unexpended contributions [FORM C/OH-UC] (former candidates and former officeholders who have filed a final report and who retained unexpended contributions or assets purchased with contributions)	January 1, 2023, <u>or</u> the day after the date the final report was filed.	December 31, 2023

REPORTS DUE BEFORE THE MAY 4, 2024, UNIFORM ELECTION

Thursday, April 4, 2024 NOTE: This report must be <u>received</u> by the appropriate filing authority no later than April 4, 2024.	30th day before the May 4, 2024, uniform election [FORM C/OH] (all local candidates who have an opponent on the ballot in the May 4 election and who do not file on the modified reporting schedule) [FORM GPAC] (all GPACs that are involved in the May 4 election) [FORM SPAC] (all SPACs that do not file on the modified reporting schedule and that supported or opposed an opposed candidate or a measure in the May 4 election)	January 1, 2024, <u>or</u> the date of campaign treasurer appointment, <u>or</u> the day after the date the last report ended.	March 25, 2024
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NOTE: A political committee must file pre-election reports if the committee is involved in the election during each pre-election reporting period. A political committee must file an 8-day pre-election report if the committee filed a 30-day pre-election report, even if there is no activity to report during the 8-day reporting period. The campaign treasurer of a political committee may be required to file 30-day and 8-day pre-election reports in connection with elections not listed on this schedule.

<u>COLUMN I</u> DUE DATE	<u>COLUMN II</u> TYPE OF REPORT (WHO FILES)	<u>COLUMN III</u> BEGINNING DATE OF PERIOD COVERED	<u>COLUMN IV</u> ENDING DATE OF PERIOD COVERED
Friday, April 26, 2024 NOTE: This report must be <u>received</u> by the appropriate filing authority no later than April 26, 2024.	8th day before May 4, 2024, uniform election [FORM C/OH] (all local candidates who have an opponent on the ballot in the May 4 election and who do not file on the modified reporting schedule) [FORM GPAC] (all GPACs that filed a "30th Day Before Election Report" or that are involved in the May 4 election) [FORM SPAC] (all SPACs that do not file on the modified reporting schedule and that filed a "30th Day Before Election Report" or that supported or opposed an opposed candidate or a measure in the May 4 election)	March 26, 2024, <u>or</u> the date of campaign treasurer appointment, <u>or</u> the day after the date the last report ended.	April 24, 2024 NOTE: Daily pre-election reports of contributions accepted and direct campaign expenditures made after April 24, 2024, may be required. Please consult the Campaign Finance Guide for further information.
Monday, July 15, 2024	July semiannual [FORM C/OH] (all local candidates and officeholders, except for officeholders who do not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file and who do not exceed \$1,080 in contributions or expenditures for the reporting period) [FORM GPAC] (all GPACs) [FORM SPAC] (all SPACs)	January 1, 2024, <u>or</u> the date of campaign treasurer appointment, <u>or</u> the day after the date the last report ended.	June 30, 2024
NOTE: A political committee must file pre-election reports if the committee is involved in the election during each pre-election reporting period. A political committee must file an 8-day pre-election report if the committee filed a 30-day pre-election report, even if there is no activity to report during the 8-day reporting period. The campaign treasurer of a political committee may be required to file 30-day and 8-day pre-election reports in connection with elections not listed on this schedule.			

<u>COLUMN I</u> DUE DATE	<u>COLUMN II</u> TYPE OF REPORT (WHO FILES)	<u>COLUMN III</u> BEGINNING DATE OF PERIOD COVERED	<u>COLUMN IV</u> ENDING DATE OF PERIOD COVERED
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REPORTS DUE BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 5, 2024, UNIFORM ELECTION

Monday, October 7, 2024 <i>Deadline is extended because of weekend.</i> NOTE: This report must be <u>received</u> by the appropriate filing authority no later than October 7, 2024.	30th day before the November 5, 2024, uniform election [FORM C/OH] (all local candidates who have an opponent on the ballot in the November 5 election and who do not file on the modified reporting schedule) [FORM GPAC] (all GPACs that are involved in the November 5 election) [FORM SPAC] (all SPACs that do not file on the modified reporting schedule and that supported or opposed an opposed candidate or a measure in the November 5 election)	July 1, 2024, <u>or</u> the date of campaign treasurer appointment, <u>or</u> the day after the date the last report ended.	September 26, 2024
Monday, October 28, 2024 NOTE: This report must be <u>received</u> by the appropriate filing authority no later than October 28, 2024.	8th day before the November 5, 2024, uniform election [FORM C/OH] (all local candidates who have an opponent on the ballot in the November 5 election and who do not file on the modified reporting schedule) [FORM GPAC] (all GPACs that filed a "30th Day Before Election Report" or that are involved in the November 5 election) [FORM SPAC] (all SPACs that do not file on the modified reporting schedule and that filed a "30th Day Before Election Report" or that supported or opposed an opposed candidate or a measure in the November 5 election)	September 27, 2024, <u>or</u> the date of campaign treasurer appointment, <u>or</u> the day after the date the last report ended.	October 26, 2024 NOTE: Daily pre- election reports of contributions accepted and direct campaign expenditures made after October 26, 2024, may be required. Please consult the Campaign Finance Guide for further information.

NOTE: A political committee must file pre-election reports if the committee is involved in the election during each pre-election reporting period. A political committee must file an 8-day pre-election report if the committee filed a 30-day pre-election report, even if there is no activity to report during the 8-day reporting period. The campaign treasurer of a political committee may be required to file 30-day and 8-day pre-election reports in connection with elections not listed on this schedule.

<u>COLUMN I</u> DUE DATE	<u>COLUMN II</u> TYPE OF REPORT (WHO FILES)	<u>COLUMN III</u> BEGINNING DATE OF PERIOD COVERED	<u>COLUMN IV</u> ENDING DATE OF PERIOD COVERED
Wednesday, January 15, 2025	January semiannual [FORM C/OH] (all local candidates and officeholders, except for officeholders who do not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file and who do not exceed \$1,080 in contributions or expenditures for the reporting period) [FORM GPAC] (all GPACs) [FORM SPAC] (all SPACs)	July 1, 2024, <u>or</u> the date of campaign treasurer appointment, <u>or</u> the day after the date the last report ended.	December 31, 2024
Wednesday, January 15, 2025	Annual report of unexpended contributions [FORM C/OH-UC] (former candidates and former officeholders who have filed a final report and who retained unexpended contributions or assets purchased with contributions)	January 1, 2024, <u>or</u> the day after the date the final report was filed.	December 31, 2024

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION

CAMPAIGN FINANCE GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES AND OFFICEHOLDERS WHO FILE WITH LOCAL FILING AUTHORITIES



This guide is for candidates for and officeholders in the following positions:

- county offices;
- precinct offices;
- single-county district offices;
- city offices; and
- offices of other political subdivisions such as school districts

This guide applies to candidates for and officeholders of justice of the peace. This guide does not apply to candidates for and judges of statutory county courts, statutory probate courts, or district courts. For those candidates and officeholders, the Ethics Commission makes available a CAMPAIGN FINANCE GUIDE FOR JUDICIAL CANDIDATES AND OFFICEHOLDERS.

The Ethics Commission also makes available a CAMPAIGN FINANCE GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES AND OFFICEHOLDERS WHO FILE WITH THE ETHICS COMMISSION, a CAMPAIGN FINANCE GUIDE FOR POLITICAL COMMITTEES, and a CAMPAIGN FINANCE GUIDE FOR POLITICAL PARTIES.

Revised January 1, 2023

Texas Ethics Commission, P.O. Box 12070, Austin, Texas 78711

www.ethics.state.tx.us

(512) 463-5800 • TDD (800) 735-2989

Promoting Public Confidence in Government

CAMPAIGN FINANCE GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES AND OFFICEHOLDERS WHO FILE WITH LOCAL FILING AUTHORITIES

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is a summary of reporting requirements and other regulations set out in Title 15 of the Texas Election Code (Chs. 251-259) and in the rules adopted by the Texas Ethics Commission. This guide applies to candidates for and officeholders in most local offices in Texas.

This guide does not apply to candidates for or officeholders of statewide elective offices, the State Legislature, seats on the State Board of Education, or multi-county district offices. Nor does it apply to candidates for or judges of statutory county courts, statutory probate courts, or district courts.

IMPORTANT UPDATES

As directed by section 571.064 of the Texas Government Code, the Commission is required to annually adjust certain reporting thresholds upward to the nearest multiple of \$10 in accordance with the percentage increase for the previous year in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor.

These changes will be made effective January 1st of each calendar year; the affected numbers and corresponding new thresholds are located in 1 T.A.C. §18.31, which can be found here: <https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/rules/>. The higher itemization thresholds will be reflected on the paper forms and in these instructions, as applicable.

Verify that you are using the correct thresholds and forms that apply to your filing. For example, if you are filing a campaign finance report or lobby activities report that is due in January of 2021, you must use the forms and instructions that are applicable to the period ending December 31, 2020.

OFFICEHOLDERS

Officeholders as well as candidates are subject to regulation under Title 15. An officeholder who has a campaign treasurer appointment on file with a filing authority is a “candidate” for purposes of Title 15 and is subject to all the regulations applicable to candidates. An officeholder who does not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file is subject only to the regulations applicable to officeholders.

Most of the requirements discussed in this guide apply to both candidates (individuals who have a campaign treasurer appointment on file) and to officeholders who do not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file. The guide will indicate whether a particular requirement applies to individuals who have campaign treasurer appointments on file, to officeholders who do not have campaign treasurer appointments on file, or to both.

JUDICIAL CANDIDATES AND OFFICEHOLDERS

Candidates for and officeholders in most judicial offices are subject to various restrictions that do not apply to other candidates and officeholders. Those candidates and officeholders should review the CAMPAIGN FINANCE GUIDE FOR JUDICIAL CANDIDATES AND OFFICEHOLDERS and the POLITICAL ADVERTISING GUIDE which are available on the commission’s website.

Nonjudicial Officeholder Seeking Judicial Office. Pursuant to Op. Tex. Ethics Comm'n No. 465 (2005), a nonjudicial officeholder who becomes a judicial candidate is required to file two campaign finance reports, one reporting nonjudicial activity and the other reporting judicial activity. Alternatively, a nonjudicial officeholder who becomes a judicial candidate may select to file a single report that includes both candidate and officeholder activity if the activity is clearly and properly reported. See the CAMPAIGN FINANCE GUIDE FOR JUDICIAL CANDIDATES AND OFFICEHOLDERS for more information.

FEDERAL OFFICES

This guide does not apply to candidates for federal offices. Candidates for federal offices should contact the Federal Election Commission. The FEC's toll-free number is (800) 424-9530.

FILING AUTHORITIES

Title 15 requires candidates and officeholders to file various documents and reports with the appropriate filing authority.

The filing authority for a local candidate or officeholder depends on the nature of the office sought or held.

County Clerk. The county clerk (or the county elections administrator if the county has an elections administrator, or tax assessor-collector if the county's commissioners court has transferred the filing authority function to the tax assessor-collector and the county clerk and tax assessor-collector have agreed to the transfer) is the appropriate filing authority for a candidate for:

- a county office;
- a precinct office;
- a district office (except for multi-county district offices); and
- an office of a political subdivision other than a county if the political subdivision is within the boundaries of a single county and if the governing body of the political subdivision has not been formed.

Other local filing authority. If a candidate is seeking an office of a political subdivision other than a county, the appropriate filing authority is the *clerk or secretary of the governing body* of the political subdivision. If the political subdivision has no clerk or secretary, the appropriate filing authority is the governing body's presiding officer.

Texas Ethics Commission. The Texas Ethics Commission is the appropriate filing authority for candidates for:

- Multi-county district offices. (Reminder: This guide does not apply to multi-county district offices.)

- An office of a political subdivision other than a county if the political subdivision includes areas in more than one county and if the governing body of the political subdivision has not been formed.

POLITICAL COMMITTEES (PACS)

Often a candidate or officeholder chooses to establish a specific-purpose political committee. A political committee is subject to *separate* filing requirements. Establishing a specific-purpose political committee does not relieve a candidate or officeholder of the obligation to file as an individual. For more information about political committees, see the Ethics Commission's CAMPAIGN FINANCE GUIDE FOR POLITICAL COMMITTEES.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

Some local candidates and officeholders are required to file an annual personal financial statement in accordance with Government Code Chapter 572 or Local Government Code Chapter 159. This statement is not a campaign finance document, and is not addressed in this guide.

FEDERAL INCOME TAX

This pamphlet does not address the federal tax implications of campaign finance. Questions regarding federal tax law should be directed to the Internal Revenue Service.

TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION

If you have a question about how Title 15 applies to you, you may call the Ethics Commission for assistance or you may request a written advisory opinion.

The Ethics Commission has authority to impose fines for violations of Title 15. If you have evidence that a person has violated Title 15, you may file a sworn complaint with the Ethics Commission.

The Ethics Commission's mailing address is P.O. Box 12070, Austin, Texas 78711. The phone number is (512) 463-5800. The Ethics Commission maintains a website at www.ethics.state.tx.us.

APPOINTING A CAMPAIGN TREASURER

If you plan to run for a public office in Texas (except for a federal office), you must file an APPOINTMENT OF A CAMPAIGN TREASURER BY A CANDIDATE (FORM CTA) with the proper filing authority before you become a candidate, even if you do not intend to accept campaign contributions or make campaign expenditures. A "candidate" is a person who knowingly and willingly takes affirmative action for the purpose of gaining nomination or election to public office or for the purpose of satisfying financial obligations incurred by the person in connection with the campaign for nomination or election. Examples of affirmative action include:

- (A) the filing of a campaign treasurer appointment, except that the filing does not constitute candidacy or an announcement of candidacy for purposes of the

automatic resignation provisions of Article XVI, Section 65, or Article XI, Section 11, of the Texas Constitution;

- (B) the filing of an application for a place on the ballot;
- (C) the filing of an application for nomination by convention;
- (D) the filing of a declaration of intent to become an independent candidate or a declaration of write-in candidacy;
- (E) the making of a public announcement of a definite intent to run for public office in a particular election, regardless of whether the specific office is mentioned in the announcement;
- (F) before a public announcement of intent, the making of a statement of definite intent to run for public office and the soliciting of support by letter or other mode of communication;
- (G) the soliciting or accepting of a campaign contribution or the making of a campaign expenditure; and
- (H) the seeking of the nomination of an executive committee of a political party to fill a vacancy.

NO CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS OR EXPENDITURES WITHOUT TREASURER APPOINTMENT ON FILE

Additionally, the law provides that you must file a campaign treasurer appointment form with the proper filing authority before you may accept a campaign contribution or make or authorize a campaign expenditure, including an expenditure from your personal funds. A filing fee paid to a filing authority to qualify for a place on a ballot is a campaign expenditure that may not be made before filing a campaign treasurer appointment form with the proper filing authority.

APPOINTING TREASURER TRIGGERS REPORTING DUTIES

After a candidate has filed a form appointing a campaign treasurer, the candidate is responsible for filing periodic reports of contributions and expenditures. Filing reports is the responsibility of the candidate, not the campaign treasurer. Even if a candidate loses an election, he or she must continue filing reports until he or she files a final report. *See “Ending Filing Obligations”* in this guide. (An officeholder who files a final report, and thereby terminates his or her campaign treasurer appointment, may still be required to file semiannual reports of contributions and expenditures as an officeholder.)

QUALIFICATIONS OF CAMPAIGN TREASURER

A person is ineligible for appointment as a campaign treasurer if the person is the campaign treasurer of a political committee that has outstanding filing obligations (including outstanding penalties). This prohibition does not apply if the committee in connection with which the ineligibility arose has not accepted more than \$5,000 in political contributions or made more than \$5,000 in political expenditures in any semiannual reporting period. A person who violates

this prohibition is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed three times the amount of political contributions accepted or political expenditures made in violation of this provision.

DUTIES OF CAMPAIGN TREASURER

A candidate's campaign treasurer has no legal duties. (Note: The campaign treasurer of a *political committee* is legally responsible for filing reports.)

EFFECTIVE DATE OF APPOINTMENT

A campaign treasurer appointment is effective when filed. A hand-delivered appointment takes effect on the date of delivery. A mailed appointment takes effect on the date of the postmark.

CODE OF FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

A filing authority should provide to each individual who files a campaign treasurer appointment a form containing a Code of Fair Campaign Practices. A candidate may pledge to conduct his or her campaign in accordance with the principles and practices set out in the Code by signing the form and filing it with the appropriate filing authority.

APPOINTMENT BY OFFICEHOLDER

If an officeholder files an appointment of campaign treasurer after a period in which he or she did not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file, the officeholder may have to file a report of contributions and expenditures no later than 15 days after filing the appointment of campaign treasurer. See "15th Day After Appointment of Campaign Treasurer by Officeholder" in this guide. An officeholder who *changes* a campaign treasurer is not required to file this report.

Note: An officeholder who has a campaign treasurer appointment on file is a candidate for purposes of Title 15.

FILING FOR A PLACE ON THE BALLOT

Filing a campaign treasurer appointment and filing for a place on the ballot are two completely separate actions. The Secretary of State can provide information about filing for a place on the ballot. Call the Secretary of State at (512) 463-5650 or toll-free at (800) 252-8683.

CHANGING TREASURERS

A candidate may change campaign treasurers at any time by filing an amended appointment of campaign treasurer (FORM ACTA). Filing an appointment of a new treasurer automatically terminates the appointment of the old treasurer.

TRANSFERRING TO A DIFFERENT FILING AUTHORITY

If a candidate has a campaign treasurer appointment on file with one filing authority and wishes to accept campaign contributions or make campaign expenditures in connection with a candidacy for an office that would require reporting to a different filing authority, the candidate must file a new campaign treasurer appointment and a copy of the old campaign treasurer appointment (certified by original authority) with the second filing authority. The candidate should also

provide written notice to the original filing authority that future reports will be filed with another authority. In general, funds accepted in connection with one office may be used in connection with a campaign for a different office, as long as neither of the offices is a judicial office.

TERMINATING A CAMPAIGN TREASURER APPOINTMENT

A candidate may terminate a campaign treasurer appointment by filing an amended appointment of campaign treasurer or by filing a final report.

A campaign treasurer may terminate his or her own appointment by notifying both the candidate and the filing authority in writing. The termination is effective on the date the candidate receives the notice or on the date the filing authority receives the notice, whichever is later.

DECIDING NOT TO RUN

A campaign treasurer appointment does not simply expire. An individual who has a campaign treasurer appointment on file must file reports of contributions and expenditures until he or she files a final report with the filing authority. See "Ending Filing Obligations" in this guide.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- If you plan to run for a public office in Texas (except for a federal office), you must file an APPOINTMENT OF A CAMPAIGN TREASURER BY A CANDIDATE (FORM CTA) with the proper filing authority before you become a candidate, even if you do not intend to accept campaign contributions or make campaign expenditures.
- A person may not accept a campaign contribution or make a campaign expenditure unless the person has a campaign treasurer appointment on file with the proper filing authority.
- Once a person files a form appointing a campaign treasurer, the person is a candidate for disclosure filing purposes and is responsible for filing periodic reports of contributions and expenditures with the proper filing authority until the person files a "final report."
- The candidate, not the campaign treasurer, is responsible for filing periodic reports of contributions and expenditures.
- Filing a campaign treasurer appointment does not automatically "sign you up" for a place on the ballot. The Secretary of State can provide information about getting on the ballot. Call (512) 463-5650 or (800) 252-8683.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES

Title 15 regulates political contributions and political expenditures. There are two types of political contributions: campaign contributions and officeholder contributions. Similarly, there are two kinds of political expenditures: campaign expenditures and officeholder expenditures.

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

A person makes a campaign contribution to a candidate if the person provides or promises something of value with the intent that it be used in connection with a campaign. A contribution of goods or services is an “in-kind” campaign contribution. A loan is considered to be a contribution unless it is from an incorporated financial institution that has been in business for more than a year. Candidates must report all loans made for campaign purposes, including loans that are not “contributions.”

- Donations to a candidate at a fund-raiser are campaign contributions.
- The provision of office space to a candidate is an “in-kind” campaign contribution.
- A promise to give a candidate money is a campaign contribution.
- An item donated to be auctioned at a fund-raiser is an “in-kind” campaign contribution. The purchase of the item at the auction is also a contribution.
- A campaign volunteer is making a contribution in the form of personal services. (Contributions of personal services are sometimes not required to be reported. See “Contributions of Personal Services” in this guide.)

Note: An individual may not accept a campaign contribution without an appointment of campaign treasurer on file with the proper filing authority.

CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES

A campaign expenditure is a payment or an agreement to make a payment in connection with a campaign for an elective office.

- Paying a filing fee in connection with an application for a place on a ballot is a campaign expenditure.
- Purchasing stationery for fund-raising letters is a campaign expenditure.
- Renting a field to hold a campaign rally is a campaign expenditure.
- Paying people to put up yard signs in connection with an election is a campaign expenditure.

Note: An individual may not make a campaign expenditure unless he or she has a campaign treasurer appointment on file with the proper filing authority.

OFFICEHOLDER CONTRIBUTIONS

The provision of or a promise to provide goods or services to an officeholder that is intended to defray expenses in connection with an officeholder's duties or activities is an officeholder contribution if the expenses are not reimbursable with public money. A contribution of goods or services is an "in-kind" officeholder contribution.

A loan from an incorporated financial institution that has been in business for more than a year is not considered a contribution, but an officeholder must report any such loans made for officeholder purposes.

An officeholder is not required to have a campaign treasurer appointment on file to accept officeholder contributions. An officeholder who does not have a campaign treasurer on file may not accept *campaign* contributions.

OFFICEHOLDER EXPENDITURES

A payment or agreement to pay certain expenses in connection with an officeholder's duties or activities is an officeholder expenditure if the expenses are not reimbursable with public money.

An officeholder is not required to have a campaign treasurer appointment on file to make officeholder expenditures. An officeholder who does not have a campaign treasurer on file may not make *campaign* expenditures.

CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES BY OFFICEHOLDER

An officeholder who has a campaign treasurer appointment on file may accept both campaign contributions and officeholder contributions and make both campaign expenditures and officeholder expenditures. On a report, there is no need for an officeholder who is a candidate to distinguish between campaign contributions and officeholder contributions or between campaign expenditures and officeholder expenditures. Both campaign contributions and officeholder contributions are reported as "political contributions" and both campaign expenditures and officeholder expenditures are reported as "political expenditures."

An officeholder who does not have a campaign treasurer on file may accept officeholder contributions and make officeholder expenditures but may not accept campaign contributions or make campaign expenditures.

PERMISSIBLE USE OF POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

An officeholder may use officeholder contributions for campaign purposes if the officeholder has an appointment of campaign treasurer on file. Candidates and officeholders may not convert political contributions to personal use. See "Campaign Finance Restrictions" in this guide.

USE OF POLITICAL FUNDS TO RENT OR PURCHASE REAL PROPERTY

A candidate or officeholder is prohibited from using political funds to purchase real property or

to pay the interest on or principal of a note for the purchase of real property.

A candidate or officeholder may not knowingly make or authorize a payment from political funds for the rental or purchase of real property from: (1) a person related to the candidate or officeholder within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity as determined under Chapter 573, Government Code; or (2) a business in which the candidate or officeholder (or a person related to the candidate or officeholder within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity) has a participating interest of more than 10 percent, holds a position on the governing body, or serves as an officer. Tex. Elec. Code § 253.038 (a-1). This restriction applies to a payment made from political funds on or after September 1, 2007, without regard to whether the payment was made under a lease or other agreement entered into before that date.

ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS

A candidate or officeholder must report contributions that he or she has *accepted*. Receipt is different from acceptance. A decision to *accept* a contribution must be made by the end of the reporting period during which the contribution is received.

Failure to make a determination about acceptance or refusal. If a candidate or officeholder fails to make a timely determination to accept or refuse a contribution by the deadline, the contribution is considered to have been accepted.

Returning refused contributions. If a candidate or officeholder receives a political contribution but does not accept it, he or she must return the contribution not later than the 30th day after the end of the reporting period in which the contribution was received. Otherwise, the contribution is considered to have been accepted.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR POLITICAL EXPENDITURES FROM PERSONAL FUNDS

If a candidate or officeholder makes political expenditures from personal funds, he or she may use political contributions to reimburse himself or herself if the expenditures are properly reported either on the reporting schedule for loans or on the reporting schedule for political expenditures from personal funds. In order for a candidate or officeholder to use political contributions to reimburse his or her personal funds, the political expenditure from personal funds must be properly reported on the report covering the period in which the expenditures are made. *A filed report may not be later corrected to indicate an intention to reimburse personal funds from political contributions.*

If a candidate or officeholder deposits personal funds in an account in which political contributions are held as permitted by section 253.0351(c) of the Election Code, the deposited amount must be reported as a loan and reimbursements to the candidate or officeholder may not exceed the amount reported as a loan. See “Campaign Expenditures from Personal Funds” in this guide for additional information.

SEPARATE ACCOUNT REQUIRED

A candidate or officeholder must keep political contributions in one or more accounts that are separate from any other account maintained by the candidate or officeholder. (There is no

requirement to keep campaign contributions in a separate account from officeholder contributions.)

RESTRICTIONS INVOLVING LOBBYING

The 2019 legislature passed House Bill 2677 to amend Chapter 305 of the Government Code and Chapter 253 of the Election Code to enact the following restrictions. Each prohibition begins on September 27, 2019. For the language of the bill, go to <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/86R/billtext/html/HB02677F.htm>.

Making Political Contributions and Direct Campaign Expenditures. Unless expressly prohibited, a lobbyist may make political contributions and direct campaign expenditures. The campaign finance law, however, generally prohibits corporations and labor organizations from making political contributions. Tex. Elec. Code § 253.094.

Section 253.006 of the Election Code prohibits a person required to register as a lobbyist under Chapter 305 of the Government Code from making political contributions or direct campaign expenditures from certain sources of funds. A person required to register as a lobbyist is prohibited from making or authorizing a political contribution to another candidate, officeholder, or political committee, or making or authorizing a direct campaign expenditure, from political contributions accepted by:

- (1) the lobbyist as a candidate or officeholder;
- (2) a specific-purpose committee that supports the lobbyist as a candidate or assists the lobbyist as an officeholder; or
- (3) a political committee that accepted a political contribution from (1) or (2), described above, during the two years immediately before the contribution or expenditure was made.

Two-Year Lobbying Prohibition After Making a Political Contribution or Direct Campaign Expenditure. Section 253.007 of the Election Code prohibits lobbying by persons who make political contributions or direct campaign expenditures from certain sources of funds. A person who makes a political contribution to another candidate, officeholder, or political committee, or makes a direct campaign expenditure, from political contributions accepted by the person as a candidate or officeholder is prohibited from engaging in activities that require registration as a lobbyist under Chapter 305 of the Government Code for two years thereafter.

However, an exception to this prohibition allows a person who does not receive compensation other than reimbursement for actual expenses to lobby on behalf of a nonprofit organization, a group of low-income individuals, or a group of individuals with disabilities.

Lobby Expenditures from Political Contributions. Section 305.029 of the Government Code prohibits certain lobby expenditures made from political contributions. A lobbyist registered under Chapter 305 of the Government Code, or a person on behalf of the lobbyist and with the lobbyist's consent or ratification, is prohibited from making a reportable lobby expenditure from a political contribution accepted by:

- (1) the lobbyist as a candidate or officeholder;

- (2) a specific-purpose committee that supports the lobbyist as a candidate or assists the lobbyist as an officeholder; or
- (3) a political committee that accepted a political contribution from (1) or (2), described above, during the two years immediately before the lobbyist made or authorized the expenditure.

INFORMATION REQUIRED ON REPORTS

CONTRIBUTIONS

A report must disclose the amount of each contribution or the value and nature of any in-kind contribution, as well as the name and address of the individual or political committee making the contribution, and the date of the contribution. (Detailed information about a contributor is not required to be reported if the contributor contributed \$100 or less during the reporting period. However, all contributions made electronically must be itemized with this information.)

PLEDGES

Promises to transfer money, goods, services, or other things of value are contributions. If a filer accepts such a promise, he or she must report it (along with the information required for other contributions) on the reporting schedule for “pledges.” Once a pledge has been received, it is reported on the appropriate receipts schedule for the reporting period in which the pledge is received. A pledge that is actually received in the same reporting period in which the pledge was accepted shall be reported only on the appropriate receipts schedule.

Note: A pledge is not a contribution unless it has been accepted.

Example 1: In June a supporter promises that he will give Juan Garcia \$1,000 in the last week before the November election. Juan accepts his promise. Juan must report the pledge on his July 15 report. Juan must also report a political contribution when the pledge is actually received. (Note: If Juan receives the pledge during the July semiannual reporting period then he does not report the pledge and only reports a political contribution. Also, if he never receives the \$1,000, he does not amend his report to delete the entry for the pledge.)

Example 2: At a party, an acquaintance says to Juan, “I’d like to give you some money; call me at my office.” Juan agrees to call. At this point, Juan has accepted nothing and has nothing to report. Juan has not agreed to accept money; he has merely agreed to call.

LOANS

Loans made for campaign or officeholder purposes are reportable. A filer must report the amount of a loan, the date the loan is made, the interest rate, the maturity date, the type of collateral, and the name and address of the lender. The filer must also report the name, address, principal occupation, and employer of any guarantor and the amount guaranteed by the guarantor. (Detailed information is not required if a particular lender lent \$100 or less during a reporting period.) If a candidate or officeholder deposits personal funds in an account in which political contributions are held as permitted by section 253.0351(c) of the Election Code, the deposited amount must be reported as a loan. See “Campaign Expenditures from Personal

Funds” in this guide for additional information.

Note: A loan from an incorporated financial institution that has been in business for more than one year is not a contribution. Other loans are considered to be contributions. This distinction is important because of the prohibition on contributions from banks and certain other financial institutions. See “Campaign Finance Restrictions” in this guide. All loans are reported on the same schedule, regardless of whether they are contributions. Additionally, the forgiveness of a loan is a reportable in-kind contribution. See 1 Tex. Admin. Code § 20.64.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF PERSONAL SERVICES

A political contribution consisting of an individual's personal services is not required to be reported if the individual receives no compensation *from any source* for the services.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF PERSONAL TRAVEL

A political contribution consisting of personal travel expense incurred by an individual is not required to be reported if the individual receives no reimbursement for the expense.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUT-OF-STATE POLITICAL COMMITTEES

There are restrictions on contributions from out-of-state political committees. The fact that a political committee has a mailing address outside of Texas does not mean that the committee is an out-of-state political committee for purposes of these restrictions. A political committee that has a campaign treasurer appointment on file in Texas is not an out-of-state political committee for purposes of these restrictions.

Contributions over \$1,010 in a reporting period. Before *accepting* more than \$1,010 in a reporting period from an out-of-state committee, a candidate or officeholder must obtain either (1) a written statement, certified by an officer of the out-of-state political committee, listing the full name and address of each person who contributed more than \$200 to the out-of-state political committee during the 12 months immediately preceding the contribution, *or* (2) a copy of the out-of-state political committee's statement of organization filed as required by law with the Federal Election Commission and certified by an officer of the out-of-state committee.

This documentation must be included with the report of contributions and expenditures for the period in which the contribution was received.

Contributions of \$1,010 or less in a reporting period. For a contribution of \$1,010 or less from an out-of-state committee in a reporting period, there is no requirement to obtain documentation *before accepting* the contribution. But there is a requirement to include certain documentation with the report of the contribution. The report must include *either* (1) a copy of the out-of-state political committee's statement of organization filed as required by law with the Federal Election Commission and certified by an officer of the out-of-state committee, *or* (2) the committee's name, address, and phone number; the name of the person appointing the committee's campaign treasurer; and the name, address, and phone number of the committee's campaign treasurer.

EXPENDITURES

A filer must report any campaign expenditure (regardless of whether it is made from political contributions or from personal funds) and any political expenditure (campaign or officeholder) from political contributions (regardless of whether the expenditure is a political expenditure). A filer must also report unpaid incurred obligations. See “Unpaid Incurred Obligations” in this guide. If the total expenditures to a particular payee do not exceed \$200 during the reporting period, a filer may report those expenditures as part of a lump sum. Otherwise, a filer must report the date of an expenditure, the name and address of the person to whom the expenditure is made, and the purpose of the expenditure.

UNPAID INCURRED OBLIGATIONS

An expenditure that is not paid during the reporting period in which the obligation to pay the expenditure is incurred shall be reported on the Unpaid Incurred Obligations Schedule for the reporting period in which the obligation to pay is incurred.

The use of political contributions to pay an expenditure previously disclosed on an Unpaid Incurred Obligations Schedule shall be reported on the appropriate disbursements schedule for the reporting period in which the payment is made.

The use of personal funds to pay an expenditure previously disclosed on an Unpaid Incurred Obligations Schedule shall be reported on the Political Expenditure Made from Personal Funds Schedule for the reporting period in which the payment is made.

EXPENDITURES MADE BY CREDIT CARD

An expenditure made by a credit card must be reported on the Expenditures Made to Credit Card Schedule for the reporting period in which the expenditure is made. The report must identify the vendor who receives the payment from the credit card company.

The use of political contributions to make a payment to a credit card company must be reported on the appropriate disbursements schedule for the reporting period in which the payment is made and identify the credit card company receiving the payment.

The use of personal funds to make a payment to a credit card company must be reported on the Political Expenditure Made from Personal Funds Schedule for the reporting period in which the payment is made and identify the credit card company receiving the payment.

CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES FROM PERSONAL FUNDS

A candidate must report all campaign expenditures, whether made from political contributions or from personal funds. In order to use political contributions to reimburse himself or herself for campaign expenditures from personal funds, the candidate must properly report the expenditures either on the reporting schedule for loans or on the reporting schedule for political expenditures from personal funds. If the candidate does not indicate the intention to seek reimbursement on that report, he or she may not later correct the report to permit reimbursement.

If a candidate or officeholder deposits personal funds in an account in which political contributions are held as permitted by section 253.0351(c) of the Election Code, the deposited

amount must be reported as a loan on Schedule E. Political expenditures made from that loan, and any subsequent expenditures to reimburse the candidate or officeholder, must be reported on Schedule F1. The reimbursement may not exceed the amount reported as a loan. Any unexpended funds from such a loan are required to be included in the total amount of political contributions maintained as of the last day of the reporting period. Note: Personal funds deposited in an account in which political contributions are held are subject to the personal use restrictions.

OFFICEHOLDER EXPENDITURES FROM PERSONAL FUNDS

An officeholder is not required to report *officeholder expenditures* made from personal funds unless he or she intends to be reimbursed from political contributions. This rule applies regardless of whether an officeholder has an appointment of campaign treasurer on file.

In order for an officeholder to use political contributions to reimburse an officeholder expenditure from personal funds, the officeholder must properly report the expenditures either on the reporting schedule for loans or on the reporting schedule for political expenditures from personal funds. If the officeholder does not indicate the intention to seek reimbursement, he or she may not later correct the report to permit reimbursement.

If a candidate or officeholder deposits personal funds in an account in which political contributions are held as permitted by section 253.0351(c) of the Election Code, the deposited amount must be reported as a loan on Schedule E. Political expenditures made from that loan, and any subsequent expenditures to reimburse the candidate or officeholder, must be reported on Schedule F1. The reimbursement may not exceed the amount reported as a loan. Any unexpended funds from such a loan are required to be included in the total amount of political contributions maintained as of the last day of the reporting period. Note: Personal funds deposited in an account in which political contributions are held are subject to the personal use restrictions.

DIRECT EXPENDITURES

A direct campaign expenditure is “a campaign expenditure that does not constitute a campaign contribution by the person making the expenditure.” As a practical matter, a direct campaign expenditure is an expenditure to support a candidate incurred without the candidate’s prior consent or approval.

If a candidate or officeholder makes a direct campaign expenditure to support *another* candidate or officeholder, the expenditure must be included on the reporting schedule for political expenditures, and the report must indicate that the expenditure was a direct campaign expenditure.

SUPPORTING POLITICAL COMMITTEES

A political committee that accepts political contributions or makes political contributions on behalf of a candidate or officeholder is required to give the candidate or officeholder notice of that fact. The candidate or officeholder must report the receipt of such a notice on the report covering the period in which he or she receives the notice.

PAYMENTS TO A BUSINESS OF THE CANDIDATE OR OFFICEHOLDER

A candidate or officeholder is required to report payments from political funds to a business in which the candidate or officeholder has a participating interest of more than 10 percent; a position on the governing body of the business; *or* a position as an officer of a business.

A candidate or officeholder may not make a payment to such a business if the payment is for personal services rendered by the candidate or officeholder or by the spouse or dependent child of the candidate or officeholder. (Nor may a candidate or officeholder use political contributions to pay directly for such personal services.) Other payments to such a business are permissible only if the payment does not exceed the amount necessary to reimburse the business for actual expenditures made by the business. *See generally* Op. Tex. Ethics Comm'n No. 35 (1992).

A candidate or officeholder may not make or authorize a payment from political funds for the rental or purchase of real property from such a business. *See* "Use of Political Funds to Rent or Purchase Real Property" in this guide.

INTEREST EARNED AND OTHER CREDITS/GAINS/REFUNDS

A candidate or officeholder is required to disclose information regarding the following types of activity from political contributions:

- any credit, interest, rebate, refund, reimbursement, or return of a deposit fee resulting from the use of a political contribution or an asset purchased with a political contribution, the amount of which exceeds \$130;
- any proceeds of the sale of an asset purchased with a political contribution, the amount of which exceeds \$130; and
- any other gain from a political contribution, the amount of which exceeds \$130.

A candidate or officeholder must use Schedule K to report such information. Although you are not required to do so, you may also report any credit/gain/refund or interest that does not exceed \$130 in the period on this schedule. (Previously, this was an optional schedule because a candidate or officeholder was not required to report this information.) A candidate or officeholder may not use interest and other income from political contributions for personal purposes. Political expenditures made from such income must be reported on the expenditures schedule.

PURCHASE OF INVESTMENTS

A candidate or officeholder must report any investment purchased with a political contribution, the amount of which exceeds \$130. This information must be disclosed on Schedule F3 of the campaign finance report.

TOTAL POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS MAINTAINED

The law requires you to disclose the total amount of political contributions accepted, including interest or other income on those contributions, maintained in one or more accounts in which

political contributions are deposited as of the last day of the reporting period. The “total amount of political contributions maintained” includes: the total amount of political contributions maintained in one or more accounts, including the balance on deposit in banks, savings and loan institutions and other depository institutions; the present value of any investments that can be readily converted to cash, such as certificates of deposit, money market accounts, stocks, bonds, treasury bills, etc.; and the balance of political contributions accepted and held in any online fundraising account over which the filer can exercise control by making a withdrawal, expenditure, or transfer. 1 Tex. Admin. Code § 20.50.

The total amount of political contributions maintained does NOT include personal funds that the filer intends to use for political expenditures, *unless* the personal funds have been disclosed as a loan to your campaign and deposited into an account in which political contributions are held as permitted by section 253.0351(c) of the Election Code. Any unexpended funds from such a loan are required to be included in the total amount of political contributions maintained as of the last day of the reporting period. Note: Personal funds deposited in an account in which political contributions are held are subject to the personal use restrictions.

TIME OF ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTION

A filer must report the date he or she *accepts* a political contribution. The date of receipt may be different from the date of acceptance. See “Accepting Contributions” in this guide.

TIME OF MAKING EXPENDITURE

For reporting purposes, an expenditure is made when the amount of the expenditure is readily determinable. An expenditure that is not paid during the reporting period in which the obligation to pay is incurred must be reported on the reporting schedule for “Unpaid Incurred Obligations,” and then reported again on the appropriate expenditure schedule when payment is actually made. If a filer cannot determine the amount of an expenditure until a periodic bill, the date of the expenditure is the date the bill is received.

Credit Card Expenditures. For purposes of 30 day and 8 day pre-election reports, the date of an expenditure made by a credit card is the date of the purchase, not the date of the credit card bill. For purposes of other reports, the date of an expenditure made by a credit card is the date of receipt of the credit card statement that includes the expenditure. For additional information regarding how to report expenditures made by credit card, see “Expenditures Made by Credit Card” in this guide.

PREPARING REPORTS

FORMS

Reporting forms are available at <http://www.ethics.state.tx.us>. An individual who is both a candidate and an officeholder files one report for each reporting period and is not required to distinguish between campaign activity and officeholder activity.

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

The candidate or officeholder, not the campaign treasurer, must sign reports.

FILING DEADLINES

The next section of this guide explains the types of reports candidates and officeholders are required to file. Annual filing schedules are available at <http://www.ethics.state.tx.us>.

Note: Deadlines for filing reports for special elections or runoff elections will not be listed on the filing schedule. Call the Ethics Commission for specific information in these cases.

PERIODS COVERED BY REPORTS

Each report covers activity during a specific time period. Generally, a report begins where the last report ended. For a candidate's first report, the beginning date will be the date the campaign treasurer appointment was filed. For an officeholder who is appointed to an elective office and who did not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file at the time of the appointment, the beginning date for the first report will be the date the officeholder took office. Generally, there should not be gaps between the periods covered or overlapping time periods. See "Reports" below for information about filing deadlines and periods covered by reports.

DEADLINE ON WEEKEND OR HOLIDAY

If the due date for a report falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the report is due on the next regular business day.

5 P.M. DEADLINE

The deadline for filing a report is 5 p.m. on the due date.

DELIVERY BY MAIL OR OTHER CARRIER

For most reporting deadlines, a document is considered timely filed if it is properly addressed with postage or handling charges prepaid and bears a postmark or receipt mark of a common or contract carrier indicating a time on or before the deadline.

Pre-Election Reports. A report due 30 days before an election and a report due 8 days before an election must be *received* by the appropriate filing authority no later than the report due date to be considered filed on time.

RETENTION OF RECORDS USED FOR REPORTS

A filer must keep records of all information used to prepare a report of contributions and expenditures, including, for example, receipts or ledgers of contributions and expenditures. A filer must maintain the records for two years after the deadline for the report.

REPORTS

SEMIANNUAL REPORTS

Generally, candidates and officeholders are required to file reports of contributions and expenditures by January 15 and July 15 of each year. The reports filed on these dates are known as semiannual reports. These reports must be filed even if there is no activity to report for the period covered.

However, there is an exception to this requirement for officeholders who file with a local filing authority, do not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file, and do not accept more than \$1,010 in officeholder contributions or make more than \$1,010 in officeholder expenditures during the period covered by the report.

REPORTS DUE 30 DAYS AND 8 DAYS BEFORE AN ELECTION

An *opposed* candidate in an upcoming election must file reports of contributions and expenditures 30 days and 8 days before the election. Each of these pre-election reports must be *received* by the appropriate filing authority no later than the report due date. (A person who has elected modified reporting and who remains eligible for modified reporting is not required to file these reports. See “Modified Reporting” in this guide.)

An opposed candidate is a candidate who has an opponent whose name is printed on the ballot. If a candidate’s only opposition is a write-in candidate, that candidate is considered unopposed for filing purposes. (Note: A write-in candidate who accepts political contributions or makes political expenditures is subject to the reporting requirements discussed in this guide.)

The report that is due 30 days before the election covers the period that begins on the first day after the period covered by the last required report and ends the 40th day before the election. If this is a filer’s first required report, the period covered by the report begins on the day the filer filed a campaign treasurer appointment.

The report that is due 8 days before the election covers the period that begins on the first day after the period covered by the last required report and ends on the 10th day before the election.

REPORT DUE 8 DAYS BEFORE A RUNOFF ELECTION

A candidate in a runoff must file a report 8 days before the runoff election. A runoff report must be *received* by the appropriate filing authority no later than the report due date. (A candidate who has elected modified reporting and who remains eligible for modified reporting is not required to file this report. See “Modified Reporting” below.)

This report covers a period that begins either the first day after the period covered by the last required report or the day the filer filed a campaign treasurer appointment (if this is the filer’s first report of contributions and expenditures). The period covered by the runoff report ends the 10th day before the runoff election.

MODIFIED REPORTING

On the campaign treasurer appointment form, there is an option to choose modified reporting for the next election cycle. Modified reporting excuses an opposed candidate from filing reports 30 days and 8 days before an election and 8 days before a runoff. An opposed candidate is eligible for modified reporting only if the candidate does not intend to exceed either \$1,010 in contributions or \$1,010 in expenditures (excluding filing fees) in connection with an election.

If an opposed candidate selects modified reporting but exceeds a threshold before the 30th day before the election, the candidate must file reports 30 days and 8 days before the election.

If an opposed candidate selects modified reporting but exceeds the \$1,010 threshold for contributions or expenditures after the 30th day before the election, the filer must file a report within 48 hours of exceeding the threshold. (The filer must meet this deadline even if it falls on a weekend or a holiday.) At that point, the filer is no longer eligible for modified reporting and must file according to the regular filing schedule.

A selection to file on the modified reporting schedule lasts for an entire election cycle. In other words, the selection is valid for a primary, a primary runoff, and a general election (as long as the candidate does not exceed one of the \$1,010 thresholds). A candidate must submit an amended campaign treasurer appointment (FORM ACTA) to select modified reporting for a different election cycle.

“15TH DAY AFTER APPOINTMENT OF CAMPAIGN TREASURER BY AN OFFICEHOLDER” REPORT

An officeholder must file a report after filing a campaign treasurer appointment. (A report is not required after a *change* in campaign treasurers.) This report of contributions and expenditures is due no later than 15 days after the campaign treasurer appointment was filed. The report must cover the period that begins the day after the period covered by the last required report. The period ends on the day before the campaign treasurer appointment was filed. (Note: A person who is *appointed* to elective office may not have filed any previous reports. In that case, the beginning date for the report due 15 days after the campaign treasurer appointment is the date the officeholder took office.) The report is not required if the officeholder did not accept more than \$1,010 in contributions or make more than \$1,010 in expenditures by the end of the reporting period.

FINAL REPORT

See “Ending Filing Obligations” below.

ANNUAL REPORT OF UNEXPENDED CONTRIBUTIONS

See “Ending Filing Obligations” below.

FINAL DISPOSITION OF UNEXPENDED CONTRIBUTIONS REPORT

See “Ending Filing Obligations” below.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- An officeholder must file semiannual reports for any period during which he or she is an officeholder. (There is an exception to this rule for officeholders who do not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file and who do not accept more than \$1,010 in political contributions or make more than \$1,010 in political expenditures during the period covered by the report.)
- An opposed candidate in an election must file reports of contributions and expenditures 30 days and 8 days before the election, unless the candidate has selected (and remains eligible for) modified reporting. An opposed candidate who has not selected modified reporting must also file a report 8 days before a runoff election. A report due 30 days before an election and a report due 8 days before an election must be received by the appropriate filing authority no later than the report due date.
- An unopposed candidate is not required to file reports 30 days before an election or 8 days before an election but is required to file semiannual reports.
- A candidate who selects modified reporting must file semiannual reports.

A filer who selects modified reporting for one election cycle will be required to file on the regular reporting schedule for the next election cycle unless the filer submits an amended campaign treasurer appointment selecting modified reporting for the next election cycle.

ENDING FILING OBLIGATIONS

FINAL REPORT

If a filer expects to accept no further political contributions and to make no further political expenditures and if the filer expects to take no further action to get elected to a public office, the filer may file a final report. Filing a final report terminates a filer's campaign treasurer appointment and relieves the filer from any additional filing obligations *as a candidate*. (Note: A candidate who does not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file may still be required to file a personal financial statement in accordance with Chapter 572 of the Government Code or Chapter 159 of the Local Government Code.) If the filer is an officeholder, the filer will still be subject to the filing requirements applicable to officeholders. A filer who is not an officeholder at the time of filing a final report *and* who has surplus political funds or assets will be required to file annual reports of unexpended contributions and a report of final disposition of unexpended contributions. See "Annual Report of Unexpended Contributions" and "Report of Final Disposition of Unexpended Contributions" below.

A filer who intends to continue accepting contributions to pay campaign debts should *not* terminate his or her campaign treasurer appointment. An individual must have a campaign treasurer appointment on file to accept contributions to offset campaign debts or to pay campaign debts.

Terminating a campaign treasurer appointment does not relieve a filer of responsibility for any delinquent reports or outstanding civil penalties.

ANNUAL REPORT OF UNEXPENDED CONTRIBUTIONS

The following individuals must file annual reports of unexpended contributions:

- a former officeholder who did not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file at the time of leaving office and who retained any of the following after filing his or her last report: political contributions, interest or other income from political contributions, or assets purchased with political contributions or interest or other income from political contributions.
- a former candidate (a person who previously had a campaign treasurer appointment on file) who was not an officeholder at the time of filing a final report and who retained any of the following at the time of filing a final report: political contributions, interest or other income from political contributions, or assets purchased with political contributions.

Annual reports are due not earlier than January 1 and not later than January 15 of each year. An annual report (FORM C/OH-UC) must contain the following information: (1) information about expenditures from or disposition of surplus funds or assets; (2) the amount of interest or other income earned on surplus funds during the previous year; and (3) the total amount of surplus funds and assets at the end of the previous year.

The obligation to file annual reports ends when the former candidate or officeholder files a report of final disposition of unexpended contributions.

REPORT OF FINAL DISPOSITION OF UNEXPENDED CONTRIBUTIONS

A former candidate or former officeholder who has disposed of all surplus funds and assets must file a report of final disposition of unexpended contributions. This report may be filed as soon as all funds have been disposed of.

A former candidate or former officeholder has six years from the date of filing a final report or leaving office (whichever is later) to dispose of surplus funds and assets. The latest possible date for filing a report of unexpended contributions is 30 days after the end of that six-year period.

At the end of the six-year period, a former candidate or officeholder *must* dispose of surplus assets or funds in one of the following ways:

- The former candidate or officeholder may give them to the political party with which he or she was affiliated when last on the ballot;
- The former candidate or officeholder may contribute them to a candidate or a political committee. (This triggers a requirement to file a report of the contribution.);
- The former candidate or officeholder may give them to the comptroller for deposit in the state treasury to be used to finance primary elections;

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- The former candidate or officeholder may give them to one or more contributors, but the total returned to any person may not exceed the aggregate amount accepted from that person during the last two years during which the former candidate or officeholder accepted political contributions;
 - The former candidate or officeholder may give them to certain charitable organizations; or
 - The former candidate or officeholder may give them to a public or private post-secondary educational institution or an institution of higher education as defined by section 61.003(8), Education Code, for the purpose of assisting or creating a scholarship program.
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THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Anyone who has an appointment of campaign treasurer on file must file periodic reports of campaign contributions and expenditures.
 - An individual who expects no further reportable activity in connection with his or her candidacy, files a final report and thereby terminates his or her campaign treasurer appointment. (Note: A candidate who does not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file may still be required to file a personal financial statement in accordance with Chapter 572 of the Government Code or Chapter 159 of the Local Government Code.)
 - An officeholder may be required to file semiannual reports even if he or she does not have a campaign treasurer appointment on file. A local officeholder who has not accepted more than \$1,010 in contributions or made more than \$1,010 in expenditures in a semiannual period since terminating his or her campaign treasurer appointment is not required to file a semiannual report for that period.
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PENALTIES FOR REPORTING VIOLATIONS

Any citizen may file a criminal complaint with the district attorney, a civil complaint with the Ethics Commission, or a civil action against a candidate or officeholder for violations of Title 15. Any penalty stemming from such complaints would be assessed against *the candidate or officeholder*, not the campaign treasurer.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE RESTRICTIONS

Chapter 253 of the Election Code contains a number of restrictions regarding the acceptance and use of political contributions, including the following:

1. An individual may not accept a campaign contribution or make a campaign expenditure (including a campaign expenditure from personal funds) without a campaign treasurer appointment on file. Tex. Elec. Code § 253.031. An officeholder may accept officeholder contributions and make officeholder

expenditures regardless of whether he or she has a campaign treasurer appointment on file.

2. Political contributions from labor organizations and from most corporations are prohibited. Tex. Elec. Code § 253.091, *et seq.* Partnerships that include one or more corporate partners are subject to the prohibition.
3. Certain documentation must be obtained in order to accept contributions from an out-of-state political committee. Tex. Elec. Code § 253.032. See “Contributions from Out-of-State Political Committees” in this guide.
4. Cash contributions of more than \$100 in the aggregate from one contributor in a reporting period are prohibited. (Here “cash” means coins and currency, not checks.) Tex. Elec. Code § 253.033.
5. The use of political contributions to purchase real property is prohibited. There is also a restriction on the use of political funds to rent or purchase real property from a person related to the candidate or officeholder within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity or from a business in which the candidate or officeholder or such a relative has a participating interest of more than 10 percent, holds a position on the governing body, or serves as an officer. Tex. Elec. Code § 253.038.
6. Texas law does not allow anonymous contributions. Also, reports must disclose the actual source of a contribution, not an intermediary. Tex. Elec. Code § 253.001.
7. Personal use of political contributions is prohibited. Tex. Elec. Code § 253.035.
8. A candidate or officeholder may not use political contributions to pay for personal services rendered by the candidate or officeholder or by the spouse, or dependent children of the candidate or officeholder. There are also restrictions of a candidate’s or officeholder’s use of political contributions to make payments to a business in which the candidate or officeholder holds a participating interest of more than 10 percent, a position on the governing body of the business, or a position as an officer of the business. See to Op. Tex. Ethics Comm’n No. 35 (1992) (regarding the combined effect of this prohibition and the prohibition on corporate contributions). Tex. Elec. Code § 253.041.

There are restrictions on the use of political contributions to reimburse political expenditures from personal funds. See “Reimbursement for Political Expenditures from Personal Funds,” in this guide.

9. A candidate, officeholder, or political committee may not accept political contributions in the Capitol, the Capitol Extension, or a courthouse. “Courthouse” means any building owned by the state, a county, or a municipality, or an office or part of a building leased to the state, a county, or a municipality, in which a justice or judge sits to conduct court proceedings. Tex. Elec. Code § 253.039.
10. A person required to register as a lobbyist is prohibited from making or authorizing a political contribution to another candidate, officeholder, or political committee, or

making or authorizing a direct campaign expenditure, from political contributions accepted by: (1) the lobbyist as a candidate or officeholder; (2) a specific-purpose committee that supports or assists the lobbyist as a candidate or officeholder; or (3) a political committee that accepted a political contribution from (1) or (2), described above, during the two years immediately before the contribution or expenditure was made. Tex. Elec. Code § 253.006.

11. A person who makes a political contribution to another candidate, officeholder, or political committee, or makes a direct campaign expenditure, from political contributions accepted by the person as a candidate or officeholder is prohibited from engaging in activities that require registration as a lobbyist for two years thereafter. This does not apply to a person who does not receive compensation other than reimbursement for actual expenses to lobby on behalf of a nonprofit organization, a group of low-income individuals, or a group of individuals with disabilities. Tex. Elec. Code § 253.007.
12. A registered lobbyist, or a person on behalf of the lobbyist and with the lobbyist's consent or ratification, is prohibited from making a reportable lobby expenditure from a political contribution accepted by: (1) the lobbyist as a candidate or officeholder; (2) a specific-purpose committee that supports or assists the lobbyist as a candidate or officeholder; or (3) a political committee that accepted a political contribution from (1) or (2), described above, during the two years immediately before the lobbyist made or authorized the expenditure. Tex. Gov't Code § 305.029.
13. Federal law generally prohibits the acceptance of contributions from foreign sources. Contact the Federal Election Commission for more detailed information.