

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

## An Act Regarding Campaign Finance Disclosure by Political Action Committees

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

**Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §1051, first ¶**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 443, Pt. A, §26, is further amended to read:

This subchapter applies to the activities of political action committees organized in and outside this State that accept contributions, incur obligations or make expenditures in an aggregate amount in excess of \$1,500 in any one calendar year for the election of state, county or municipal officers, or for the support or defeat of any campaign, as defined in this subchapter.

**Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §1052, sub-§5, ¶A**, as amended by PL 2005, c. 575, §5, is further amended to read:

A. Includes:

(1) Any separate or segregated fund established by any corporation, membership organization, cooperative or labor or other organization whose purpose is to influence the outcome of an election, including a candidate election or ballot question;

(4) Any organization, including any corporation or association, that has as its major purpose advocating the passage or defeat of a ballot question and that solicits funds from members or nonmembers initiating, promoting, defeating or influencing a candidate election, campaign or ballot question and that spends more than \$1,500 in a calendar year to initiate, advance, promote, defeat or influence in any way a candidate, campaign, political party, referendum or initiated petition for that purpose, including for the collection of signatures for a direct initiative, or referendum in this State; and

(5) Any organization that does not have as its major purpose promoting, defeating or influencing candidate elections but that spends more than \$5,000 in a calendar year for the purpose of promoting, defeating or influencing in any way the nomination or election of any candidate to political office; and

**Sec. 3. 21-A MRSA §1053, first ¶**, as amended by PL 2005, c. 575, §6, is further amended to read:

Every political action committee, as defined under section 1052, subsection 5, paragraph A, subparagraph (1) or (4), that accepts contributions, incurs obligations or makes expenditures in the aggregate in excess of \$1,500 in any single calendar year to initiate, support, defeat or influence in any way a campaign, referendum, initiated petition, including the collection of signatures for a direct initiative, candidate, political committee or another political action committee and every political action committee, as defined under section 1052, subsection 5, paragraph A, subparagraph (5), that makes expenditures in the aggregate in excess of \$5,000 must register with the commission; within 7 days of accepting those

~~contributions, incurring those obligations or making those expenditures, exceeding the applicable amount~~ on forms prescribed by the commission. These forms must include the following information and any additional information reasonably required by the commission to monitor the activities of political action committees in this State under this subchapter:

**Sec. 4. 21-A MRSA §1056-B**, as enacted by PL 1999, c. 729, §8, is amended to read:

### **§ 1056-B. Ballot question committees**

Any person not defined as a political action committee who solicits and receives contributions or makes expenditures, other than by contribution to a political action committee, aggregating in excess of ~~\$1,500~~\$5,000 for the purpose of initiating, promoting, defeating or influencing in any way a ballot question must file a report with the commission. In the case of a municipal election, a copy of the same information must be filed with the clerk of that municipality. Within 7 days of receiving contributions or making expenditures that exceed \$5,000, the person shall register with the commission as a ballot question committee. For the purposes of this section, expenditures include paid staff time spent for the purpose of influencing in any way a ballot question. The commission must prescribe forms for the registration, and the forms must include specification of a treasurer for the committee, any other principal officers and all individuals who are the primary fund-raisers and decision makers for the committee.

**1. Filing requirements.** A report required by this section must be filed with the commission according to a reporting schedule that the commission shall establish that takes into consideration existing campaign finance reporting schedule requirements in section 1059.

**2. Content.** A report must contain an itemized account of each expenditure made to and contribution received and expenditure made from a single source aggregating in excess of \$100 in any election; the date of each contribution; the date and purpose of each expenditure; and the name and address of each contributor, payee or creditor. ~~Total contributions or expenditures of less than \$500 in any election need not be itemized. The report must state whether the purpose for receiving contributions and making expenditures is in support of or in opposition to the ballot question.~~ The filer is required to report only those contributions made to the filer for the purpose of initiating, promoting, defeating or influencing in any way a ballot question and only those expenditures made for those purposes. The definitions of "contribution" and "expenditure" in section 1052, subsections 3 and 4, respectively, apply to persons required to file ballot question reports.

**2-A. Contributions.** For the purposes of this section, "contribution" includes, but is not limited to:

- A. Funds that the contributor specified were given in connection with a ballot question;
- B. Funds provided in response to a solicitation that would lead the contributor to believe that the funds would be used specifically for the purpose of initiating, promoting, defeating or influencing in any way a ballot question;
- C. Funds that can reasonably be determined to have been provided by the contributor for the purpose of initiating, promoting, defeating or influencing in any way a ballot question when viewed in the context of the contribution and the recipient's activities regarding a ballot question; and
- D. Funds or transfers from the general treasury of an organization filing a ballot question report.

**3. Forms.** A report required by this section must be on a form prescribed and prepared by the commission. A person filing this report may use additional pages if necessary, but the pages must be the same size as the pages of the form.

**4. Records.** A person filing a report required by this section shall keep records as required by this subsection for one year following the election to which the records pertain.

A. The filer shall keep a detailed account of all contributions made to the filer for the purpose of initiating, promoting, defeating or influencing in any way a ballot question and all expenditures made for those purposes.

B. The filer shall retain a vendor invoice or receipt stating the particular goods or services purchased for every expenditure in excess of \$50.

**Sec. 5. 21-A MRSA §1058,** as amended by PL 2007, c. 443, Pt. A, §34, is further amended to read:

### **§ 1058. Reports; qualifications for filing**

~~A political action committee that is registered~~required to register with the commission ~~or that accepts contributions or makes expenditures and incurs obligations in an aggregate amount in excess of \$1,500 on any one or more campaigns for the office of Governor, for state or county office or for the support or defeat of a referendum or initiated petition~~ shall file a report on its activities in that campaign with the commission on forms as prescribed by the commission. A political action committee organized in this State required under this section to file a report shall file the report for each filing period under section 1059. A political action committee organized outside this State shall file with the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices of this State a copy of the report that the political action committee is required to file in the state in which the political action committee is organized. The political action committee shall file the copy only if it has expended funds or received contributions or made expenditures in this State. The copy of the report must be filed in accordance with the schedule of filing in the state where it is organized. If contributions or expenditures are made relating to a municipal office or referendum, the report must be filed with the clerk in the subject municipality.

**Sec. 6. 21-A MRSA §1060, sub-§6,** as amended by PL 2007, c. 443, Pt. A, §36, is further amended to read:

**6. Identification of contributions.** Names, occupations, places of business and mailing addresses of contributors who have given more than \$50 to the political action committee in the reporting period and the amount and date of each contribution, except that an organization qualifying as a political action committee under section 1052, subsection 5, paragraph A, subparagraph (5) is required to report only those contributions made to the organization for the purpose of promoting, defeating or influencing a ballot question or the nomination or election of a candidate to political office and all transfers to or funds used to support the political action committee from the general treasury of the organization; and

**Sec. 7. 21-A MRSA §1060, sub-§7,** as enacted by PL 1991, c. 839, §31 and affected by §33, is amended to read:

**7. Other expenditures.** Operational expenses and other expenditures in cash or in kind that are not made on behalf of a candidate, committee or campaign, except that an organization qualifying as a political action committee under section 1052, subsection 5, paragraph A, subparagraph (5) is required to report only those expenditures made for the purpose of promoting, defeating or influencing a ballot question or the nomination or election of a candidate to political office.

Effective June 30, 2008