

TEXAS ELECTION CODE

Subchapter F. Judicial Campaign Fairness Act

- Sec. 253.151. Applicability of Subchapter.
- Sec. 253.152. Definitions.
- Sec. 253.153. Contribution Prohibited Except During Election Period.
- Sec. 253.154. Write-in Candidacy.
- Sec. 253.1541. Acceptance of Political Contributions by Person Appointed to Fill Vacancy.
- Sec. 253.155. Contribution Limits.
- Sec. 253.157. Limit on Contribution General-Purpose Committees.
- Sec. 253.158. Contribution by Spouse or Child.
- Sec. 253.159. Exception to Contribution Limits.
- Sec. 253.160. Repealed.
- Sec. 253.1601. Contribution to Certain Committees Considered Contribution to Candidate or Officeholder.
- Sec. 253.161. Use of Contribution from Nonjudicial or Judicial Office Prohibited.
- Sec. 253.1611. Certain Contributions by Judicial Candidates, Officeholders, and Committees Restricted.
- Sec. 253.1612. Certain Campaign Activities Authorized.
- Sec. 253.162. Restrictions on Reimbursement of Personal Funds and Payments on Certain Loans.
- Sec. 253.1621. Application of Contribution and Reimbursement Limits to Certain Candidates.
- Sec. 253.163. Repealed.
- Sec. 253.164. Repealed.
- Sec. 253.165. Repealed.
- Sec. 253.166. Repealed.
- Sec. 253.167. Certification of Population; Notice of Contribution Limits.
- Sec. 253.168. Repealed.
- Sec. 253.169. Repealed.
- Sec. 253.170. Repealed.
- Sec. 253.171. Contribution from or Direct Campaign Expenditure by Political Party.
- Sec. 253.172. Repealed.
- Sec. 253.173. Repealed.
- Sec. 253.174. Repealed.
- Sec. 253.175. Repealed.
- Sec. 253.176. Civil Penalty.

Chapter 254. Political Reporting

Subchapter A. Recordkeeping

- Sec. 254.001. Recordkeeping Required.

Subchapter B. Political Reporting Generally

- Sec. 254.031. General Contents of Reports.
- Sec. 254.0311. Report by Legislative Caucus.
- Sec. 254.0312. Best Efforts.
- Sec. 254.0313. Omission of Address for Judge and Spouse.
- Sec. 254.032. Nonreportable Personal Travel Expense.
- Sec. 254.033. Nonreportable Personal Service.
- Sec. 254.034. Time of Accepting Contribution.
- Sec. 254.035. Time of Making Expenditure.
- Sec. 254.036. Form of Report; Affidavit; Mailing of Forms.
- Sec. 254.0362. Use of Publicly Accessible Computer Terminal for Preparation of Reports.
- Sec. 254.037. Filing Deadline.
- Sec. 254.038. Special Report Near Election by Certain Candidates and Political Committees.
- Sec. 254.039. Special Report Near Election by Certain General-Purpose Committees.
- Sec. 254.0391. Report During Special Legislative Session.
- Sec. 254.040. Preservation of Reports; Record of Inspection.

- Sec. 254.0401. Availability of Reports on Internet.
- Sec. 254.04011. Availability of Reports of School Trustees on Internet.
- Sec. 254.0402. Public Inspection of Reports.
- Sec. 254.0405. Amendment of Filed Report.
- Sec. 254.041. Criminal Penalty for Untimely or Incomplete Report.
- Sec. 254.042. Civil Penalty for Late Report.
- Sec. 254.043. Action to Require Compliance.

Subchapter C. Reporting by Candidate

- Sec. 254.061. Additional Contents of Reports.
- Sec. 254.0611. Additional Contents of Reports by Certain Judicial Candidates.
- Sec. 254.0612. Additional Contents of Reports by Candidate for Statewide Executive Office or Legislative Office.
- Sec. 254.062. Certain Officeholder Activity Included.
- Sec. 254.062. Semiannual Reporting Schedule for Candidate.
- Sec. 254.063. Additional Reports of Opposed Candidate.
- Sec. 254.064. Final Report.
- Sec. 254.065. Authority With Whom Reports Filed.

Subchapter D. Reporting by Officeholder

- Sec. 254.091. Additional Contents of Reports.
- Sec. 254.0911. Additional Contents of Reports by Certain Judicial Officeholders.
- Sec. 254.0912. Additional Contents of Reports by Statewide Executive Officeholders and Legislative Officeholders.
- Sec. 254.092. Certain Officeholder Expenditures Excluded.
- Sec. 254.093. Semiannual Reporting Schedule for Officeholder.
- Sec. 254.094. Report Following Appointment of Campaign Treasurer.
- Sec. 254.095. Report Not Required.
- Sec. 254.096. Officeholder Who Becomes Candidate.
- Sec. 254.097. Authority With Whom Reports Filed.

Subchapter E. Reporting by Specific Purpose Committee

- Sec. 254.121. Additional Contents of Reports.
- Sec. 254.1211. Additional Contents of Reports of Certain Committees.
- Sec. 254.1212. Additional Contents of Reports of Committee Supporting or Opposing Candidate for Statewide Executive Officeholders or Legislative Officeholders or Assisting Statewide Executive Officeholders or Legislative Officeholders.
- Sec. 254.122. Involvement in More Than One Election by Certain Committees.
- Sec. 254.123. Semiannual Reporting Schedule for Committee.
- Sec. 254.124. Additional Reports of Committee for Supporting or Opposing Candidate or Measure.
- Sec. 254.125. Final Report of Committee for Supporting or Opposing Candidate or Measure.
- Sec. 254.126. Dissolution Report of Committee for Assisting Officeholder.
- Sec. 254.127. Termination Report.
- Sec. 254.128. Notice to Candidate and Officeholder of Contributions and Expenditures.
- Sec. 254.129. Notice of Change in Committee Status.
- Sec. 254.130. Authority With Whom Reports Filed.

Subchapter F. Reporting by General Purpose Committee

- Sec. 254.151. Additional Contents of Reports.
- Sec. 254.152. Time for Reporting Certain Expenditures.
- Sec. 254.153. Semiannual Reporting Schedule for Committee.
- Sec. 254.154. Additional Reports of Committee Involved in Election.

- Sec. 254.1541. Alternate Reporting Requirements for Certain Committees.
- Sec. 254.155. Option to File Monthly; Notice.
- Sec. 254.156. Contents of Monthly Reports.
- Sec. 254.157. Monthly Reporting Schedule.
- Sec. 254.158. Exception to Monthly Reporting Schedule.
- Sec. 254.1581. Reporting by Out-of-State Political Committee.
- Sec. 254.159. Dissolution Report.
- Sec. 254.160. Termination Report.
- Sec. 254.161. Notice to Candidate and Officeholder of Contributions and Expenditures.
- Sec. 254.162. Notice of Change in Committee Status.
- Sec. 254.163. Authority With Whom Reports Filed.
- Sec. 254.164. Certain Committees Exempt from Civil Penalties.

Subchapter G. Modified Reporting Procedures; \$500 Maximum in Contributions or Expenditures

- Sec. 254.181. Modified Reporting Authorized.
- Sec. 254.182. Declaration of Intent Required.
- Sec. 254.183. Maximum Exceeded.
- Sec. 254.184. Applicability of Regular Reporting Requirements.

Subchapter H. Unexpended Contributions

- Sec. 254.201. Annual Report of Unexpended Contributions.
- Sec. 254.202. Filing of Report; Contents.
- Sec. 254.203. Retention of Contributions.
- Sec. 254.204. Disposition of Unexpended Contributions.
- Sec. 254.205. Report of Disposition of Unexpended Contributions.

Subchapter I. Civil Liability

- Sec. 254.231. Liability to Candidates.
- Sec. 254.232. Liability to State.

Subchapter J. Reporting by Certain Persons Making Direct Campaign Expenditures

- Sec. 254.261. Direct Campaign Expenditure Exceeding \$100.
- Sec. 254.262. Travel Expense.

Chapter 255. Regulating Political Advertising and Campaign Communications

- Sec. 255.001. Required Disclosure on Political Advertising.
- Sec. 255.002. Rates for Political Advertising.
- Sec. 255.003. Unlawful Use of Public Funds for Political Advertising.
- Sec. 255.0031. Unlawful Use of Internal Mail System for Political Advertising.
- Sec. 255.004. True Source of Communication.
- Sec. 255.005. Misrepresentation of Identity.
- Sec. 255.006. Misleading Use of Office Title.
- Sec. 255.007. Relocated to V.T.C.A., Election Code § 259.001.
- Sec. 255.008. Disclosure on Political Advertising for Judicial Office.

Chapter 257. Political Parties

- Sec. 257.001. Principal Political Committee of Political Party.
- Sec. 257.002. Requirements Relating to Corporate or Labor Union Contributions.
- Sec. 257.003. Report Required.
- Sec. 257.004. Restrictions on Contributions Before General Election.
- Sec. 257.005. Candidate for State or County Chair of Political Party.

- Sec. 257.006. Criminal Penalty for Failure to Comply.
- Sec. 257.007. Rules.

Chapter 258. Fair Campaign Practices

- Sec. 258.001. Short Title.
- Sec. 258.002. Purpose.
- Sec. 258.003. Delivery of Copy of Code.
- Sec. 258.004. Text of Code.
- Sec. 258.005. Forms.
- Sec. 258.006. Acceptance and Preservation of Copies.
- Sec. 258.007. Subscription to Code Voluntary.
- Sec. 258.008. Indication on Political Advertising.
- Sec. 258.009. Civil Cause of Action.

Chapter 259. Political Signs

- Sec. 259.001. Notice Requirement on Political Advertising Signs.
- Sec. 259.002. Regulation of Display of Political Signs by Property Owner's Association.
- Sec. 259.003. Regulation of Political Signs by Municipality.

CHAPTER 251. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Subchapter A. General Provisions

Sec. 251.001. Definitions.

In this title:

(1) "Candidate" means 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 [Vernon's Ann. Tex. Const. Art. XVI, § 65, or Art. XI, § 11];

(B) the filing of an application for a place on a 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.

(2) "Contribution" means a direct or indirect transfer of money, goods, services, or any other thing of value and includes an agreement made or other obligation incurred, whether legally

enforceable or not, to make a transfer. The term includes a loan or extension of credit, other than those expressly excluded by this subdivision, and a guarantee of a loan or extension of credit, including a loan described by this subdivision. The term does not include:

(A) a loan made in the due course of business by a corporation that is legally engaged in the business of lending money and that has conducted the business continuously for more than one year before the loan is made; or

(B) an expenditure required to be reported under Section 305.006(b), Government Code.

(3) "Campaign contribution" means a contribution to a candidate or political committee that is offered or given with the intent that it be used in connection with a campaign for elective office or on a measure. Whether a contribution is made before, during, or after an election does not affect its status as a campaign contribution.

(4) "Officeholder contribution" means a contribution to an officeholder or political committee that is offered or given with the intent that it be used to defray expenses that:

(A) are incurred by the officeholder in performing a duty or engaging in an activity in connection with the office; and

(B) are not reimbursable with public money.

(5) "Political contribution" means a campaign contribution or an officeholder contribution.

(6) "Expenditure" means a payment of money or any other thing of value and includes an agreement made or other obligation incurred, whether legally enforceable or not, to make a payment.

(7) "Campaign expenditure" means an expenditure made by any person in connection with a campaign for an elective office or on a measure. Whether an expenditure is made before, during, or after an election does not affect its status as a campaign expenditure.

(8) "Direct campaign expenditure" means a campaign expenditure that does not constitute a campaign contribution by the person making the expenditure. A campaign expenditure does not constitute a contribution by the person making the expenditure to a candidate or officeholder if the expenditure is made without the prior consent or approval of the candidate or officeholder on whose behalf the expenditure is made. A campaign expenditure made in connection with a measure does not constitute a contribution by the person making the expenditure if it is not made as a political contribution to a political committee supporting or opposing the measure.

(9) "Officeholder expenditure" means an expenditure made by any person to defray expenses that:

(A) are incurred by an officeholder in performing a duty or engaging in an activity in connection with the office; and

(B) are not reimbursable with public money.

(10) "Political expenditure" means a campaign expenditure or an officeholder expenditure.

(11) "Reportable activity" means a political contribution, political expenditure, or other activity required to be reported under this title.

(12) "Political committee" means two or more persons acting in concert with a principal purpose accepting political contributions or making political expenditures. The term does not include a group composed exclusively of two or more

individual filers or political committees required to file reports under this title who make reportable expenditures for a joint activity.

(13) "Specific-purpose committee" means a political committee that does not have among its principal purposes those of a general-purpose committee but does have among its principal purposes:

(A) supporting or opposing one or more:

(i) candidates, all of whom are identified and are seeking offices that are known; or

(ii) measures, all of which are identified;

(B) assisting one or more officeholders, all of whom are identified; or

(C) supporting or opposing only one candidate who is unidentified or who is seeking an office that is unknown.

(14) "General-purpose committee" means a political committee that has among its principal purposes:

(A) supporting or opposing:

(i) two or more candidates who are unidentified or are seeking offices that are unknown; or

(ii) one or more measures that are unidentified; or

(B) assisting two or more officeholders who are unidentified.

(15) "Out-of-state political committee" means a political committee that:

(A) makes political expenditures outside this state; and

(B) in the 12 months immediately preceding the making of a political expenditure by the committee inside this state (other than an expenditure made in connection with a campaign for a federal office or made for a federal officeholder), makes 80 percent or more of the committee's total political expenditures in any combination of elections outside this state and federal offices not voted on in this state.

(16) "Political advertising" means a communication supporting or opposing a candidate for nomination or election to a public office or office of a political party, a political party, a public officer, or a measure that:

(A) in return for consideration, is published in a newspaper, magazine, or other periodical or is broadcast by radio or television; or

(B) appears:

(i) in a pamphlet, circular, flier, billboard or other sign, bumper sticker, or similar form of written communication; or

(ii) on an Internet website.

(17) "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.

(18) "Labor organization" means an agency, committee, or any other organization in which employees participate that exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work.

(19) "Measure" means a question or proposal submitted in an election for an expression of the voters' will and includes the circulation and submission of a petition to determine whether a question or proposal is required to be submitted in an election for an expression of the voters' will.

(20) "Commission" means the Texas Ethics Commission.

(21) "In-kind contribution" means a contribution of goods, services, or any other thing of value that is not money, and

includes an agreement made or other obligation incurred, whether legally enforceable or not, to make the contribution. The term does not include a direct campaign expenditure. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.01, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.01, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 1127, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 251.0015. Communication with Candidate.

For purposes of Section 251.001(8), communication between a person and a candidate, officeholder, or candidate's or officeholder's agent is not evidence that the person obtained the candidate's or officeholder's consent or approval for a campaign expenditure made after the communication by the person on behalf of the candidate or officeholder unless the communication establishes that:

(1) the expenditure is incurred at the request or suggestion of the candidate, officeholder, or candidate's or officeholder's agent;

(2) the candidate, officeholder, or candidate's or officeholder's agent is materially involved in decisions regarding the creation, production, or distribution of a campaign communication related to the expenditure; or

(3) the candidate, officeholder, or candidate's or officeholder's agent shares information about the candidate's or officeholder's plans or needs that is:

(A) material to the creation, production, or distribution of a campaign communication related to the expenditure; and

(B) not available to the public.

(Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 1127, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 251.0016. Common Vendor.

A person using the same vendor as a candidate, officeholder, or political committee established or controlled by a candidate or officeholder is not acting in concert with the candidate, officeholder, or committee to make a campaign expenditure unless the person makes the expenditure using information from the vendor about the campaign plans or needs of the candidate, officeholder, or committee that is:

(1) material to the expenditure; and

(2) not available to the public.

(Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 1127, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 251.002. Officeholders Covered.

(a) The provisions of this title applicable to an officeholder apply only to a person who holds an elective public office and to the secretary of state.

(b) For purposes of this title, a state officer-elect or a member-elect of the legislature is considered an officeholder beginning on the day after the date of the general or special election at which the officer-elect or member-elect was elected. This subsection does not relieve a state officer-elect or member-elect of the legislature of any reporting requirements the person may have as a candidate under this title.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 251.003. Prohibition of Document Filing Fee.

A charge may not be made for filing a document required to be filed under this title.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 251.004. Venue.

(a) Venue for a criminal offense prescribed by this title is in the county of residence of the defendant, unless the defendant is not a Texas resident, in which case venue is in Travis County.

(b) Venue for the recovery of delinquent civil penalties imposed by the commission under this title is in Travis County. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1134, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 251.005. Out-of-State Committees Excluded.

(a) An out-of-state political committee is not subject to Chapter 252 or 254, except as provided by Subsection (b), (c), or (d).

(b) If an out-of-state committee decides to file a campaign treasurer appointment under Chapter 252, at the time the appointment is filed the committee becomes subject to this title to the same extent as a political committee that is not an out-of-state committee.

(c) If an out-of-state committee performs an activity that removes the committee from out-of-state status as defined by Section 251.001(15), the committee becomes subject to this title to the same extent as a political committee that is not an out-of-state committee.

(d) An out-of-state political committee that does not file a campaign treasurer appointment shall comply with Section 254.1581.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.02, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Sec. 251.006. Federal Office Excluded.

(a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), this title does not apply to a candidate for an office of the federal government.

(b) A candidate for an elective office of the federal government shall file with the commission a copy of each document relating to the candidacy that is required to be filed under federal law. The document shall be filed within the same period in which it is required to be filed under the federal law. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.01, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Act; 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 236, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 251.007. Timeliness of Action by Mail.

When this title requires a notice, report, or other document or paper to be delivered, submitted, or filed within a specified period or before a specified deadline, a delivery, submission, or filing by first-class United States mail or common or contract carrier is timely, except as otherwise provided by this title, if:

(1) it is properly addressed with postage or handling charges prepaid; and

(2) it bears a post office cancellation mark or a receipt mark of a common or contract carrier indicating a time within the period or before the deadline, or if the person required to take the action furnishes satisfactory proof that it was deposited in the mail or with a common or contract carrier within the period or before the deadline.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 251.008. Certain Political Club Meetings Excluded.

(a) An expense incurred in connection with the conduct of a meeting of an organization or club affiliated with a political party at which a candidate for an office regularly filled at the general election for state and county officers, or a person holding that office, appears before the members of the organization or club is not considered to be a political contribution or political expenditure if no political contributions are made to or solicited for the candidate or officeholder at the meeting.

(b) In this section, an organization or club is affiliated with a political party if it:

(1) supports the nominees of that political party but does not support any candidate seeking the party's nomination for an office over any other candidate seeking that nomination; and

(2) is recognized by the political party as an auxiliary of the party.

(Added by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 422, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 752, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995)

Sec. 251.009. Legislative Caucus Contribution or Expenditure Not Considered to be Officeholder Contribution or Expenditure.

A contribution to or expenditure by a legislative caucus, as defined by Section 253.0341, is not considered to be an officeholder contribution or officeholder expenditure for purposes of this title.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 43, § 4, eff. Aug. 28, 1995)

Subchapter B. Duties of Commission

Sec. 251.032. Forms.

In addition to furnishing samples of the appropriate forms to the authorities having administrative duties under this title, the commission shall furnish the forms to each political party's state executive committee and county chair of each county executive committee.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.03, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Act; 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 237, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 251.033. Notification of Deadline for Filing Reports.

(a) The commission shall notify each person responsible for filing a report with the commission under Subchapters C through F, Chapter 254, of the deadline for filing a report, except that notice of the deadline is not required for a political

committee involved in an election other than a primary election or the general election for state and county officers. Notification under this subsection may be sent by electronic mail.

(b) If the commission is unable to notify a person of a deadline after two attempts, the commission is not required to make any further attempts to notify the person of that deadline or any future deadlines until the person has notified the commission of the person's current address or electronic mail address.

(c) Chapter 552, Government Code, does not apply to a notification under this section sent by electronic mail.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.04, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 996, § 1, eff. June 19, 2009)

CHAPTER 252. CAMPAIGN TREASURER

Sec. 252.001. Appointment of Campaign Treasurer Required.

Each candidate and each political committee shall appoint a campaign treasurer as provided by this chapter.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 252.0011. Ineligibility for Appointment as Campaign Treasurer.

(a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) or (c), a person is ineligible for appointment as a campaign treasurer if the person is the campaign treasurer of a political committee that does not file a report required by Chapter 254.

(b) The period for which a person is ineligible under Subsection (a) for appointment as a campaign treasurer ends on the date on which the political committee in connection with which the person's ineligibility arose has filed each report required by Chapter 254 that was not timely filed or has paid all fines and penalties in connection with the failure to file the report.

(c) Subsection (a) does not apply to a person if, in any semiannual reporting period prescribed by Chapter 254:

(1) the political committee in connection with which the person's ineligibility arose did not accept political contributions that in the aggregate exceed \$5,000 or make political expenditures that in the aggregate exceed \$5,000; and

(2) the candidate who or political committee that subsequently appoints the person does not accept political contributions that in the aggregate exceed \$5,000 or make political expenditures that in the aggregate exceed \$5,000.

(d) Subsection (c) applies to a person who is the campaign treasurer of a general-purpose committee regardless of whether the committee files monthly reports under Section 254.155. For purposes of this subsection, political contributions accepted and political expenditures made during a monthly reporting period are aggregated with political contributions accepted and political expenditures made in each other monthly reporting period that corresponds to the semiannual reporting period that contains those months.

(e) A candidate or political committee is considered to have not appointed a campaign treasurer if the candidate or committee appoints a person as campaign treasurer whose appointment is prohibited by Subsection (a).

(f) A person who violates this section 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 section.

(Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.03, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Sec. 252.002. Contents of Appointment.

(a) A campaign treasurer appointment must be in writing and include:

- (1) the campaign treasurer's name;
- (2) the campaign treasurer's residence or business street address;
- (3) the campaign treasurer's telephone number; and
- (4) the name of the person making the appointment.

(b) A political committee that files its campaign treasurer appointment with the commission must notify the commission in writing of any change in the campaign treasurer's address not later than the 10th day after the date on which the change occurs.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.05, eff. Aug. 30, 1993)

Sec. 252.003. Contents of Appointment by General-Purpose Committee.

(a) In addition to the information required by Section 252.002, a campaign treasurer appointment by a general-purpose committee must include:

(1) the full name, and any acronym of the name that will be used in the name of the committee as provided by Subsection (d), of each corporation, labor organization, or other association or legal entity that directly establishes, administers, or controls the committee, if applicable, or the name of each person who determines to whom the committee makes contributions or the name of each person who determines for what purposes the committee makes expenditures;

(2) the full name and address of each general-purpose committee to whom the committee intends to make political contributions;

(3) the name of the committee and, if the name is an acronym, the words the acronym represents; and

(4) before the committee may use a political contribution from a corporation or a labor organization to make a direct campaign expenditure in connection with a campaign for an elective office, an affidavit stating that:

(A) the committee is not established or controlled by a candidate or an officeholder; and

(B) the committee will not use any political contribution from a corporation or a labor organization to make a political contribution to:

- (i) a candidate for elective office;
- (ii) an officeholder; or
- (iii) a political committee that has not filed an affidavit under this subdivision or Section 252.0031(a)(2).

(a-1) Filing an affidavit under Subsection (a)(4) does not create any additional reporting requirements under Section 254.261.

(b) If any of the information required to be included in a general-purpose committee's appointment changes, excluding changes reported under Section 252.002(b), the committee shall file an amended appointment with the commission not later than the 30th day after the date the change occurs.

(c) The name of a general-purpose committee may not be the same as or deceptively similar to the name of any other general-purpose committee whose campaign treasurer appointment is filed with the commission. The commission shall determine whether the name of a general-purpose political committee is in violation of this prohibition and shall immediately notify the campaign treasurer of the offending political committee of that determination. The campaign treasurer of the political committee must file a name change with the commission not later than the 14th day after the date of notification. A campaign treasurer who fails to file a name change as provided by this subsection or a political committee that continues to use a prohibited name after its campaign treasurer has been notified by the commission commits an offense. An offense under this subsection is a Class B misdemeanor.

(d) The name of a general-purpose committee must include the name of each corporation, labor organization, or other association or legal entity other than an individual that directly establishes, administers, or controls the committee. The name of an entity that is required to be included in the name of the committee may be a commonly recognized acronym by which the entity is known.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.02, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Act; 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.06, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 1127, § 3, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 252.0031. Contents of Appointment by Specific-Purpose Committee.

(a) In addition to the information required by Section 252.002, a campaign treasurer appointment by a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a candidate for an office specified by Section 252.005(1) must include:

(1) the name of and the office sought by the candidate; and

(2) before the committee may use a political contribution from a corporation or a labor organization to make a direct campaign expenditure in connection with a campaign for an elective office, an affidavit stating that:

(A) the committee is not established or controlled by a candidate or an officeholder; and

(B) the committee will not use any political contribution from a corporation or a labor organization to make a political contribution to:

- (i) a candidate for elective office;
- (ii) an officeholder; or
- (iii) a political committee that has not filed an affidavit under this subdivision or Section 252.003(a)(4).

(a-1) If the information required to be provided under Subsection (a) changes, the committee shall immediately file an amended appointment reflecting the change.

(a-2) Filing an affidavit under Subsection (a)(2) does not create any additional reporting requirements under Section 254.261.

(b) The name of a specific-purpose committee for supporting a candidate for an office specified by Section 252.005(1) must include the name of the candidate that the committee supports.

(Added by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 2, § 7.15(a), eff. Aug. 28, 1989; Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.03, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 1127, § 4, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 252.0032. Contents of Appointment by Candidate.

(a) In addition to the information required by Section 252.002, a campaign treasurer appointment by a candidate must include:

(1) the candidate's telephone number; and
 (2) a statement, signed by the candidate, that the candidate is aware of the nepotism law, Chapter 573, Government Code.

(b) A campaign treasurer appointment that is filed in a manner other than by use of an officially prescribed form is not invalid because it fails to comply with Subsection (a)(2).

(Added by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 2, § 7.15(a), eff. Aug. 28, 1989; Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3A.03, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 76, § 5.95(26), eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1134, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 252.004. Designation of Oneself.

An individual may appoint himself or herself as campaign treasurer.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 238, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 252.005. Authority With Whom Appointment Filed: Candidate.

An individual must file a campaign treasurer appointment for the individual's own candidacy with:

(1) the commission, if the appointment is made for candidacy for:

(A) a statewide office;
 (B) a district office filled by voters of more than one county;
 (C) a judicial district office filled by voters of only one county;
 (D) state senator;
 (E) state representative; or
 (F) the State Board of Education;

(2) the county clerk, if the appointment is made for candidacy for a county office, a precinct office, or a district office other than one included in Subdivision (1);

(3) the clerk or secretary of the governing body of the political subdivision or, if the political subdivision has no clerk or secretary, with the governing body's presiding officer, if the appointment is made for candidacy for an office of a political subdivision other than a county;

(4) the county clerk if:

(A) the appointment is made for candidacy for an office of a political subdivision other than a county;

(B) the governing body for the political subdivision has not been formed; and

(C) no boundary of the political subdivision crosses a boundary of the county; or

(5) the commission if:

(A) the appointment is made for candidacy for an office of a political subdivision other than a county;

(B) the governing body for the political subdivision has not been formed; and

(C) the political subdivision is situated in more than one county.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.07, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Act; 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 511, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999)

Sec. 252.006. Authority With Whom Appointment Filed: Specific-Purpose Committee for Supporting or Opposing Candidate or Assisting Officeholder.

A specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a candidate or assisting an officeholder must file its campaign treasurer appointment with the same authority as the appointment for candidacy for the office.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 252.007. Authority With Whom Appointment Filed: Specific-Purpose Committee for Supporting or Opposing Measure.

A specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a measure must file its campaign treasurer appointment with:

(1) the commission, if the measure is to be submitted to voters of the entire state;

(2) the county clerk, if the measure is to be submitted to voters of a single county in an election ordered by a county authority;

(3) the secretary of the governing body of the political subdivision or, if the political subdivision has no secretary, with the governing body's presiding officer, if the measure is to be submitted at an election ordered by an authority of a political subdivision other than a county;

(4) the county clerk if:

(A) the measure concerns a political subdivision other than a county;

(B) the governing body for the political subdivision has not been formed; and

(C) no boundary of the political subdivision crosses a boundary of a county; or

(5) the commission if:

(A) the measure concerns a political subdivision other than a county;

(B) the governing body for the political subdivision has not been formed; and

(C) the political subdivision is situated in more than one county.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.08, eff. Aug. 30, 1993)

Sec. 252.008. Multiple Filings by Specific-Purpose Committee Not Required.

If under this chapter a specific-purpose committee is required to file its campaign treasurer appointment with more than one authority, the appointment need only be filed with the commission and, if so filed, need not be filed with the other authorities.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.09, eff. Aug. 30, 1993)

Sec. 252.009. Authority With Whom Appointment Filed: General-Purpose Committee.

A general-purpose committee must file its campaign treasurer appointment with the commission.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.10, eff. Aug. 30, 1993)

Sec. 252.010. Transfer of Appointment.

(a) If a candidate who has filed a campaign treasurer appointment decides to seek a different office that would require the appointment to be filed with another authority, a copy of the appointment certified by the authority with whom it was originally filed must be filed with the other authority in addition to the new campaign treasurer appointment.

(b) The original appointment terminates on the filing of the copy with the appropriate authority or on the 10th day after the date the decision to seek a different office is made, whichever is earlier.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 252.011. Time Appointment Takes Effect; Period of Effectiveness.

(a) A campaign treasurer appointment takes effect at the time it is filed with the authority specified by this chapter.

(b) A campaign treasurer appointment continues in effect until terminated.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 252.012. Removal of Campaign Treasurer.

(a) A campaign treasurer appointed under this chapter may be removed at any time by the appointing authority by filing the written appointment of a successor in the same manner as the original appointment.

(b) The appointment of a successor terminates the appointment of the campaign treasurer who is removed.

(c) If the campaign treasurer of a specific-purpose political committee required to file its campaign treasurer appointment with the commission or of a general-purpose political committee

is removed by the committee, the departing campaign treasurer shall immediately file written notification of the termination of appointment with the commission.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987;

(Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.11, eff. Aug. 30, 1993)

Sec. 252.013. Termination of Appointment on Vacating Position.

(a) If a campaign treasurer resigns or otherwise vacates the position, the appointment is terminated at the time the vacancy occurs.

(b) A campaign treasurer who vacates the treasurer's position shall immediately notify the appointing authority in writing of the vacancy.

(c) If the campaign treasurer of a specific-purpose political committee required to file its campaign treasurer appointment with the commission or of a general-purpose political committee resigns or otherwise vacates the position, the campaign treasurer shall immediately file written notification of the vacancy with the commission.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.12, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Act; 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 239, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 252.0131. Termination of Campaign Treasurer Appointment.

(a) The commission by rule shall adopt a process by which the commission may terminate the campaign treasurer appointment of an inactive candidate or political committee that is required to file a campaign treasurer appointment with the commission. The governing body of a political subdivision by ordinance or order may adopt a process by which the clerk or secretary, as applicable, of the political subdivision may terminate the campaign treasurer appointment of an inactive candidate or political committee that is required to file a campaign treasurer appointment with the clerk or secretary. For purposes of this section, a candidate or political committee is inactive if the candidate or committee:

(1) has never filed or has ceased to file reports under Chapter 254;

(2) in the case of a candidate, has not been elected to an office for which a candidate is required to file a campaign treasurer appointment with the authority who is seeking to terminate the candidate's campaign treasurer appointment; and

(3) has not filed:

(A) a final report under Section 254.065 or 254.125; or

(B) a dissolution report under Section 254.126 or 254.159.

(b) Before the commission may terminate a campaign treasurer appointment, the commission must consider the proposed termination in a regularly scheduled open meeting. Before the clerk or secretary of a political subdivision may terminate a campaign treasurer appointment, the governing body of the political subdivision must consider the proposed termination in a regularly scheduled open meeting.

(c) Rules or an ordinance or order adopted under this section must:

(1) define "inactive candidate or political committee" for purposes of terminating the candidate's or committee's campaign treasurer appointment; and

(2) require written notice to the affected candidate or committee of:

(A) the proposed termination of the candidate's or committee's campaign treasurer appointment;

(B) the date, time, and place of the meeting at which the commission or governing body of the political subdivision, as applicable, will consider the proposed termination; and

(C) the effect of termination of the candidate's or committee's campaign treasurer appointment.

(d) The termination of a campaign treasurer appointment under this section takes effect on the 30th day after the date of the meeting at which the commission or governing body, as applicable, votes to terminate the appointment. Following that meeting, the commission or the clerk or secretary of the political subdivision, as applicable, shall promptly notify the affected candidate or political committee that the appointment has been terminated. The notice must state the effective date of the termination.

(Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.04, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 597, § 1, eff. June 17, 2005)

Sec. 252.014. Preservation of Filed Appointments.

The authority with whom a campaign treasurer appointment is filed under this chapter shall preserve the appointment for two years after the date the appointment is terminated.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 252.015. Assistant Campaign Treasurer.

(a) Each specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a candidate for an office specified by Section 252.005(1) or a statewide or district measure and each general-purpose committee may appoint an assistant campaign treasurer by written appointment filed with the commission.

(b) In the campaign treasurer's absence, the assistant campaign treasurer has the same authority as a campaign treasurer.

(c) Sections 252.011, 252.012, 252.013, and 252.014 apply to the appointment and removal of an assistant campaign treasurer.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.13, eff. Aug. 30, 1993)

CHAPTER 253. RESTRICTIONS ON CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES

Subchapter A. General Restrictions

Sec. 253.001. Contribution or Expenditure in Another's Name Prohibited.

(a) A person may not knowingly make or authorize a political contribution in the name of or on behalf of another unless the person discloses in writing to the recipient the name and address of the person actually making the contribution in order for the recipient to make the proper disclosure.

(b) A person may not knowingly make or authorize a political expenditure in the name of or on behalf of another unless the person discloses in writing to the person on whose behalf the expenditure is made the name and address of the person actually making the expenditure in order for the person on whose behalf the expenditure is made to make the proper disclosure.

(c) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1134, § 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 253.002. Repealed.

Sec. 253.003. Unlawfully Making or Accepting Contribution.

(a) A person may not knowingly make a political contribution in violation of this chapter.

(b) A person may not knowingly accept a political contribution the person knows to have been made in violation of this chapter.

(c) This section does not apply to a political contribution made or accepted in violation of Subchapter F.

(d) Except as provided by Subsection (e), a person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(e) A violation of Subsection (a) or (b) is a felony of the third degree if the contribution is made in violation of Subchapter D.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 2, eff. June 16, 1995)

Sec. 253.004. Unlawfully Making Expenditure.

(a) A person may not knowingly make or authorize a political expenditure in violation of this chapter.

(b) This section does not apply to a political expenditure made or authorized in violation of Subchapter F.

(c) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 2, eff. June 16, 1995)

Sec. 253.005. Expenditure From Unlawful Contribution.

(a) A person may not knowingly make or authorize a political expenditure wholly or partly from a political contribution the person knows to have been made in violation of this chapter.

(b) This section does not apply to a political expenditure that is:

(1) prohibited by Section 253.101; or

(2) made from a political contribution made in violation of Subchapter F.

(c) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 2, eff. June 16, 1995)

Sec. 253.006. Certain Contributions and Expenditures by Lobbyists Restricted.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a person required to register under Chapter 305, Government Code, may not knowingly make or authorize a political contribution or political expenditure that is a political contribution to another candidate, officeholder, or political committee, or direct campaign expenditure, from political contributions accepted by:

- (1) the person as a candidate or officeholder;
- (2) a specific-purpose committee for the purpose of supporting the person as a candidate or assisting the person as an officeholder; or
- (3) a political committee that accepted a political contribution from a source described by Subdivision (1) or (2) during the two-year period immediately before the date the political contribution or expenditure was made.

(Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 839, § 1, eff. Sept. 27, 2019)

Sec. 253.007. Prohibition on Lobbying by Person Making or Authorizing Certain Political Contributions and Direct Campaign Expenditures.

(a) In this section, "administrative action," "communicates directly with," "legislation," "member of the executive branch," and "member of the legislative branch" have the meanings assigned by Section 305.002, Government Code.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law and except as provided by Subsection (c), a person who knowingly makes or authorizes a political contribution or political expenditure that is a political contribution to another candidate, officeholder, or political committee, or direct campaign expenditure, from political contributions accepted by the person as a candidate or officeholder may not engage in any activities that require the person to register under Chapter 305, Government Code, during the two-year period after the date the person makes or authorizes the political contribution or direct campaign expenditure.

(c) Subsection (b) does not apply to a person who:

(1) communicates directly with a member of the legislative or executive branch only to influence legislation or administrative action on behalf of:

(A) a nonprofit organization exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(a), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as an organization described by Section 501(c)(3) of that code;

(B) a group of low-income individuals; or

(C) a group of individuals with disabilities; and

(2) does not receive compensation other than reimbursement for actual expenses for engaging in communication described by Subdivision (1).

(Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 839, § 1, eff. Sept. 27, 2019)

Subchapter B. Candidates, Officeholders, and Political Committees

Sec. 253.031. Contribution and Expenditure Without Campaign Treasurer Prohibited.

(a) A candidate may not knowingly accept a campaign contribution or make or authorize a campaign expenditure at a time when a campaign treasurer appointment for the candidate is not in effect.

(b) A political committee may not knowingly accept political contributions totaling more than \$500 or make or authorize political expenditures totaling more than \$500 at a time when a campaign treasurer appointment for the committee is not in effect.

(c) A political committee may not knowingly make or authorize a campaign contribution or campaign expenditure supporting or opposing a candidate for an office specified by Section 252.005(1) in a primary or general election unless the committee's campaign treasurer appointment has been filed not later than the 30th day before the appropriate election day.

(d) This section does not apply to a political party's county executive committee that accepts political contributions or makes political expenditures, except that:

(1) a county executive committee that accepts political contributions or makes political expenditures shall maintain the records required by Section 254.001; and

(2) a county executive committee that accepts political contributions or makes political expenditures that, in the aggregate, exceed \$25,000 in a calendar year shall file:

(A) a campaign treasurer appointment as required by Section 252.001 not later than the 15th day after the date that amount is exceeded; and

(B) the reports required by Subchapter F, Chapter 254, (V.T.C.A., Election Code § 254.151 et seq.), including in the political committee's first report all political contributions accepted and all political expenditures made before the effective date of the campaign treasurer appointment.

(e) This section does not apply to an out-of-state political committee unless the committee is subject to Chapter 252 under Section 251.005.

(f) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.04, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Act; 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 531, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 1079, § 1, eff. June 18, 2005)

Sec. 253.032. Limitation on Contribution by Out-of-State Committee.

(a) In a reporting period, a candidate, officeholder, or political committee may not knowingly accept political contributions totaling more than \$500 from an out-of-state political committee unless, before accepting a contribution that would cause the total to exceed \$500, the candidate, officeholder, or political committee, as applicable, receives from the out-of-state committee:

(1) a written statement, certified by an officer of the out-of-state committee, listing the full name and address of each person who contributed more than \$100 to the out-of-state committee during the 12 months immediately preceding the date of the contribution; or

(2) a copy of the out-of-state 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.

(b) This section does not apply to a contribution from an out-of-state political committee if the committee appointed a

campaign treasurer under Chapter 252 before the contribution was made and is subject to the reporting requirements of Chapter 254.

(c) A person who violates Subsection (a) commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(d) A candidate, officeholder, or political committee shall include the statement or copy required by Subsection (a) as a part of the report filed under Chapter 254 that covers the reporting period to which Subsection (a) applies.

(e) A candidate, officeholder, or political committee that accepts political contributions totaling \$500 or less from an out-of-state political committee shall include as part of the report filed under Chapter 254 that covers the reporting period in which the contribution is accepted:

(1) the same information for the out-of-state political committee required for general-purpose committees by Sections 252.002 and 252.003; or

(2) a copy of the out-of-state 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.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 996, § 7, eff. Sept. 1, 1995)

Sec. 253.033. Cash Contributions Exceeding \$100 Prohibited.

(a) A candidate, officeholder, or specific-purpose committee may not knowingly accept from a contributor in a reporting period political contributions in cash that in the aggregate exceed \$100.

(b) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.034. Restrictions on Contributions During and Following Regular Legislative Session.

(a) During the period beginning on the 30th day before the date a regular legislative session convenes and continuing through the 20th day after the date of final adjournment, a person may not knowingly make a political contribution to:

(1) a statewide officeholder;

(2) a member of the legislature; or

(3) a specific-purpose committee for supporting, opposing, or assisting a statewide officeholder or member of the legislature.

(b) A statewide officeholder, a member of the legislature, or a specific-purpose committee for supporting, opposing, or assisting a statewide officeholder or member of the legislature may not knowingly accept a political contribution, and shall refuse a political contribution that is received, during the period prescribed by Subsection (a). A political contribution that is received and refused during that period shall be returned to the contributor not later than the 30th day after the date of receipt. A contribution made by United States mail or by common or contract carrier is not considered received during that period if it was properly addressed and placed with postage or carrier charges prepaid or prearranged in the mail or delivered to the contract carrier before the beginning of the period. The date indicated by the post office cancellation mark

or the common or contract carrier documents is considered to be the date the contribution was placed in the mail or delivered to the common or contract carrier unless proven otherwise.

(c) This section does not apply to a political contribution that was made and accepted with the intent that it be used:

(1) in an election held or ordered during the period prescribed by Subsection (a) in which the person accepting the contribution is a candidate if the contribution was made after the person appointed a campaign treasurer with the appropriate authority and before the person was sworn in for that office;

(2) to defray expenses incurred in connection with an election contest; or

(3) by a person who holds a state office or a member of the legislature if the person or member was defeated at the general election held immediately before the session is convened or by a specific-purpose political committee that supports or assists only that person or member.

(d) This section does not apply to a political contribution made to or accepted by a holder of an office to which Subchapter F [V.T.C.A., Election Code § 253.151 et seq.] applies.

(e) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.05, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1134, § 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, §§ 2.05, 2.06, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 426, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2009)

Sec. 253.0341. Restrictions on Contributions to Legislative Caucuses During and Following Regular Legislative Session.

(a) During the period beginning on the 30th day before the date a regular legislative session convenes and continuing through the 20th day after the date of final adjournment, a person not a member of the caucus may not knowingly make a contribution to a legislative caucus.

(b) A legislative caucus may not knowingly accept from a nonmember a contribution, and shall refuse a contribution from a nonmember that is received, during the period prescribed by Subsection (a). A contribution that is received and refused during that period shall be returned to the contributor not later than the 30th day after the date of receipt. A contribution made by United States mail or by common or contract carrier is not considered received during that period if it was properly addressed and placed with postage or carrier charges prepaid or prearranged in the mail or delivered to the contract carrier before the beginning of the period. The date indicated by the post office cancellation mark or the common or contract carrier documents is considered to be the date the contribution was placed in the mail or delivered to the common or contract carrier unless proven otherwise.

(c) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(d) A person who knowingly makes or accepts a contribution in violation of this section is liable for damages to the state in the amount of triple the value of the unlawful contribution.

(e) In this section, "legislative caucus" means an organization that is composed exclusively of members of the legislature,

that elects or appoints officers and recognizes identified legislators as members of the organization, and that exists for research and other support of policy development and interests that the membership hold in common. The term includes an entity established by or for a legislative caucus to conduct research, education, or any other caucus activity. An organization whose only nonlegislator members are the lieutenant governor or the governor remains a "legislative caucus" for purposes of this section.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 43, § 1, eff. Aug. 28, 1995; Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1134, § 5, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, §§ 2.07, 2.08, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 426, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2009)

Sec. 253.035. Restrictions on Personal Use of Contributions.

(a) A person who accepts a political contribution as a candidate or officeholder may not convert the contribution to personal use.

(b) A specific-purpose committee that accepts a political contribution may not convert the contribution to the personal use of a candidate, officeholder, or former candidate or officeholder.

(c) The prohibitions prescribed by Subsections (a) and (b) include the personal use of an asset purchased with the contribution and the personal use of any interest and other income earned on the contribution.

(d) In this section, "personal use" means a use that primarily furthers individual or family purposes not connected with the performance of duties or activities as a candidate for or holder of a public office. The term does not include:

(1) payments made to defray ordinary and necessary expenses incurred in connection with activities as a candidate or in connection with the performance of duties or activities as a public officeholder, including payment of rent, utility, and other reasonable housing or household expenses incurred in maintaining a residence in Travis County by members of the legislature who do not ordinarily reside in Travis County, but excluding payments prohibited under Section 253.038; or

(2) payments of federal income taxes due on interest and other income earned on political contributions.

(e) Subsection (a) applies only to political contributions accepted on or after September 1, 1983. Subsection (b) applies only to political contributions accepted on or after September 1, 1987.

(f) A person who converts a political contribution to the person's personal use in violation of this section is civilly liable to the state for an amount equal to the amount of the converted contribution plus reasonable court costs.

(g) A specific-purpose committee that converts a political contribution to the personal use of a candidate, officeholder, or former candidate or officeholder in violation of this section is civilly liable to the state for an amount equal to the amount of the converted contribution plus reasonable court costs.

(h) Except as provided by Section 253.0351 or 253.042, a candidate or officeholder who makes political expenditures

from the candidate's or officeholder's personal funds may reimburse those personal funds from political contributions in the amount of those expenditures only if:

(1) the expenditures from personal funds were fully reported as political expenditures, including the payees, dates, purposes, and amounts of the expenditures, in the report required to be filed under this title that covers the period in which the expenditures from personal funds were made; and

(2) the report on which the expenditures from personal funds are disclosed clearly designates those expenditures as having been made from the person's personal funds and that the expenditures are subject to reimbursement.

(i) "Personal use" does not include the use of contributions for:

(1) defending a criminal action or prosecuting or defending a civil action brought by or against the person in the person's status as a candidate or officeholder; or

(2) participating in an election contest or participating in a civil action to determine a person's eligibility to be a candidate for, or elected or appointed to, a public office in this state.

(j), (k) Repealed by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.20, eff. Jan. 1, 1992.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.06, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Act; 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 996, § 9, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 240, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 253.0351. Loans From Personal Funds.

(a) A candidate or officeholder who makes political expenditures from the candidate's or officeholder's personal funds may report the amount expended as a loan and may reimburse those personal funds from political contributions in the amount of the reported loan.

(b) Section 253.035(h) applies if the person does not report an amount as a loan as authorized by Subsection (a).

(c) A candidate or officeholder who deposits personal funds in an account in which political contributions are held shall report the amount of personal funds deposited as a loan and may reimburse the amount deposited as a loan from political contributions or unexpended personal funds deposited in the account. The reimbursement may not exceed the amount reported as a loan. Personal funds deposited in an account in which political contributions are held are subject to Section 253.035 and must be included in the reports of the total amount of political contributions maintained required by Sections 254.031(a)(8) and 254.0611(a).

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 996, § 8, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 241, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., ch. 4, § 76.01, eff. July 19, 2011)

Sec. 253.036. Officeholder Contributions Used in Connection With Campaign.

An officeholder who lawfully accepts officeholder contributions may use those contributions in connection with the officeholder's campaign for elective office after appointing a campaign treasurer.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.037. Restrictions on Contribution or Expenditure by General-Purpose Committee.

(a) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 209, § 5(1), eff. Sept. 1, 2019.

(b) A general-purpose committee may not knowingly make a political contribution to another general-purpose committee unless the other committee is listed in the campaign treasurer appointment of the contributor committee.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 209, § 5(1), eff. Sept. 1, 2019.

(d) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 531, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 209, § 5(1), eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.038. Payments Made to Purchase Real Property or to Rent Certain Real Property Prohibited.

(a) A candidate or officeholder or a specific-purpose committee for supporting, opposing, or assisting the candidate or officeholder may not knowingly make or authorize a payment from a political contribution to purchase real property or to pay the interest on or principal of a note for the purchase of real property.

(a-1) A candidate or officeholder or a specific-purpose committee for supporting, opposing, or assisting the candidate or officeholder may not knowingly make or authorize a payment from a political contribution for the rental or purchase of real property from:

(1) a person related within the second degree by consanguinity or affinity, as determined under Chapter 573, Government Code, to the candidate or officeholder; or

(2) a business in which the candidate or officeholder or a person described by Subdivision (1) has a participating interest of more than 10 percent, holds a position on the governing body, or serves as an officer.

(b) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this subsection is a Class A misdemeanor.

(c) This section does not apply to a payment made in connection with real property that was purchased before January 1, 1992.

(Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.07, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Amended by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., ch. 1087, §§ 1, 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2007)

Sec. 253.039. Contributions in Certain Public Buildings Prohibited.

(a) A person may not knowingly make or authorize a political contribution while in the Capitol or a courthouse to:

(1) a candidate or officeholder;

(2) a political committee; or

(3) a person acting on behalf of a candidate, officeholder, or political committee.

(b) A candidate, officeholder, or political committee or a person acting on behalf of a candidate, officeholder, or political committee may not knowingly accept a political contribution, and shall refuse a political contribution that is received, in the Capitol or a courthouse.

(c) This section does not prohibit contributions made in the Capitol or a courthouse through the United States postal service or a common or contract carrier.

(d) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(h) In this section, "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

Editor's note—Subsection (h) was added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 518, § 1, even though Subsections (e) through (g) do not exist. (Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.07, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 518, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2009)

Sec. 253.040. Separate Accounts.

(a) Except as provided by Section 253.0351(c), each candidate or officeholder shall keep the person's campaign and officeholder contributions in one or more accounts that are separate from any other account maintained by the person.

(b) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor.

(Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.09, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Amended by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., ch. 4, § 76.02, eff. July 19, 2011)

Sec. 253.041. Restrictions on Certain Payments.

(a) A candidate or officeholder or a specific-purpose committee for supporting, opposing, or assisting the candidate or officeholder may not knowingly make or authorize a payment from a political contribution if the payment is made for personal services rendered by the candidate or officeholder or by the spouse or dependent child of the candidate or officeholder to:

(1) a business in which the candidate or officeholder has a participating interest of more than 10 percent, holds a position on the governing body of the business, or serves as an officer of the business; or

(2) the candidate or officeholder or the spouse or dependent child of the candidate or officeholder.

(b) A payment that is made from a political contribution to a business described by Subsection (a) and that is not prohibited by that subsection may not exceed the amount necessary to reimburse the business for actual expenditures made by the business.

(c) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this subsection is a Class A misdemeanor. (Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.07, eff. Jan. 1, 1992)

Sec. 253.042. Restrictions on Reimbursement of Personal Funds and Payments on Certain Loans.

(a) A candidate or officeholder who makes political expenditures from the candidate's or officeholder's personal funds may not reimburse those personal funds from political contributions in amounts that in the aggregate exceed the following amounts for each election in which the person's name appears on the ballot:

(1) for a statewide office other than governor, \$250,000; and

(2) for governor, \$500,000.

(b) A candidate or officeholder who accepts one or more political contributions in the form of loans, including an extension of credit or a guarantee of a loan or extension of credit, from one or more persons related to the candidate or officeholder within the second degree by affinity or consanguinity may not use political contributions to repay the loans in amounts that in the aggregate exceed the amount prescribed by Subsection (a).

(c) The total amount of both reimbursements and repayments made by a candidate or officeholder under this section may not exceed the amount prescribed by Subsection (a).

(d) A person who is both a candidate and an officeholder covered by Subsection (a) may reimburse the person's personal funds or repay loans from political contributions only in one capacity.

(e) This section does not prohibit the payment of interest on loans covered by this section at a commercially reasonable rate, except that interest on loans from a candidate's or officeholder's personal funds or on loans from the personal funds of any person related to the candidate or officeholder within the second degree by affinity or consanguinity is included in the amount prescribed by Subsection (a), (b), or (c).

(f) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(g) The commission shall study possible restrictions on amounts of reimbursements under Subsection (a) in connection with the offices of state senator and state representative and shall make appropriate recommendations to the legislature on those matters.

(Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.07, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 242, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 253.043. Political Contributions Used in Connection With Appointive Office.

A former candidate or former officeholder who lawfully accepts political contributions may use those contributions to make an expenditure to defray expenses incurred by the person in performing a duty or engaging in an activity in connection with an appointive office of a state board or commission. (Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.09, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Subchapter C. Repealed

Subchapter D. Corporations and Labor Organizations

Sec. 253.091. Corporations Covered.

This subchapter applies only to corporations that are organized under the Texas Business Corporation Act, the Texas For-Profit Corporation Law, the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act, the Texas Nonprofit Corporation Law, federal law, or law of another state or nation.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Amended by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., ch. 481, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2007)

Sec. 253.092. Treatment of Incorporated Political Committee.

If a political committee the only principal purpose of which is accepting political contributions and making political expenditures incorporates for liability purposes only, the committee is not considered to be a corporation for purposes of this subchapter.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.093. Certain Associations Covered.

(a) For purposes of this subchapter, the following associations, whether incorporated or not, are considered to be corporations covered by this subchapter: banks, trust companies, savings and loan associations or companies, insurance companies, reciprocal or interinsurance exchanges, railroad companies, cemetery companies, government-regulated cooperatives, stock companies, and abstract and title insurance companies.

(b) For purposes of this subchapter, the members of the associations specified by Subsection (a) are considered to be stockholders.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.094. Contributions Prohibited.

(a) A corporation or labor organization may not make a political contribution or political expenditure that is not authorized by this subchapter.

(b) A corporation or labor organization may not make a political contribution in connection with a recall election, including the circulation and submission of a petition to call an election.

(c) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., ch. 1009, §§ 1, 2, eff. June 17, 2011)

Sec. 253.095. Punishment of Agent.

An officer, director, or other agent of a corporation or labor organization who commits an offense under this subchapter is punishable for the grade of offense applicable to the corporation or labor organization.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.096. Contribution on Measure.

A corporation or labor organization may make campaign contributions from its own property in connection with an election on a measure only to a political committee for supporting or opposing measures exclusively.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.097. Contribution from Corporation or Labor Organization.

A corporation or labor organization may make campaign contributions from its own property to a political committee that has filed an affidavit with the committee's campaign treasurer appointment in accordance with Section 252.003(a)(4) or 252.0031(a)(2).

(Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 1127, § 5, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.098. Communication With Stockholders or Members.

(a) A corporation or labor organization may make one or more direct campaign expenditures from its own property for the purpose of communicating directly with its stockholders or members, as applicable, or with the families of its stockholders or members.

(b) An expenditure under this section is not reportable under Chapter 254.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.099. Nonpartisan Voter Registration and Get-out-the-Vote Campaigns.

(a) A corporation or labor organization may make one or more expenditures to finance nonpartisan voter registration and get-out-the-vote campaigns aimed at its stockholders or members, as applicable, or at the families of its stockholders or members.

(b) An expenditure under this section is not reportable under Chapter 254.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.100. Expenditures for General-Purpose Committee.

(a) A corporation, acting alone or with one or more other corporations, may make one or more political expenditures to finance the establishment or administration of a general-purpose committee. In addition to any other expenditure that is considered permissible under this section, a corporation may make an expenditure for the maintenance and operation of a general-purpose committee, including an expenditure for:

- (1) office space maintenance and repairs;
- (2) telephone and Internet services;
- (3) office equipment;
- (4) utilities;
- (5) general office and meeting supplies;
- (6) salaries for routine clerical, data entry, and administrative assistance necessary for the proper administrative operation of the committee;
- (7) legal and accounting fees for the committee's compliance with this title;
- (8) routine administrative expenses incurred in establishing and administering a general-purpose political committee;

(9) management and supervision of the committee, including expenses incurred in holding meetings of the committee's governing body to interview candidates and make endorsements relating to the committee's support;

(10) the recording of committee decisions;

(11) expenses incurred in hosting candidate forums in which all candidates for a particular office in an election are invited to participate on the same terms; or

(12) expenses incurred in preparing and delivering committee contributions; or

(13) creation and maintenance of the committee's public Internet web pages that do not contain political advertising.

(b) A corporation may make political expenditures, including fully or partially matching contributions to an organization that is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, to finance the solicitation of political contributions to a general-purpose committee assisted under Subsection (a) from the stockholders, employees, or families of stockholders or employees of one or more corporations.

(c) A labor organization may engage in activity authorized for a corporation by this section. For purposes of this section, the members of a labor organization are considered to be corporate stockholders.

(d) A corporation or labor organization may not make expenditures under this section for:

- (1) political consulting to support or oppose a candidate;
- (2) telephoning or telephone banks to communicate with the public;
- (3) brochures and direct mail supporting or opposing a candidate;
- (4) partisan voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives;
- (5) political fund-raising other than from its stockholders or members, as applicable, or the families of its stockholders or members;
- (6) voter identification efforts, voter lists, or voter databases that include persons other than its stockholders or members, as applicable, or the families of its stockholders or members;
- (7) polling designed to support or oppose a candidate other than of its stockholders or members, as applicable, or the families of its stockholders or members; or
- (8) recruiting candidates.

(e) Subsection (d) does not apply to a corporation or labor organization making a campaign contribution to a political committee under Section 253.097 or an expenditure to communicate with its stockholders or members, as applicable, or with the families of its stockholders or members as provided by Section 253.098.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.26, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 1306, § 1, eff. June 19, 2009; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 1127, § 6, eff. Sept. 1, 2019; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 1239, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.101. Unlawful Contribution or Expenditure by Committee.

(a) A political committee assisted by a corporation or labor organization under Section 253.100 may not make a political contribution or political expenditure in whole or part from money that is known by a member or officer of the

political committee to be dues, fees, or other money required as a condition of employment or condition of membership in a labor organization.

(a-1) Subsection (a) does not prohibit a political committee from making a political contribution or political expenditure wholly or partly from a campaign contribution made by a corporation or labor organization to the political committee under Section 253.096 or 253.097.

(b) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 1127, § 7, Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.102. Coercion Prohibited.

(a) A corporation or labor organization or a political committee assisted by a corporation or labor organization under Section 253.100 commits an offense if it uses or threatens to use physical force, job discrimination, or financial reprisal to obtain money or any other thing of value to be used to influence the result of an election or to assist an officeholder.

(b) A political committee assisted by a corporation or labor organization under Section 253.100 commits an offense if it accepts or uses money or any other thing of value that is known by a member or officer of the political committee to have been obtained in violation of Subsection (a).

(c) An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.103. Corporate Loans.

(a) A corporation may not make a loan to a candidate, officeholder, or political committee for campaign or officeholder purposes unless:

(1) the corporation has been legally and continuously engaged in the business of lending money for at least one year before the loan is made; and

(2) the loan is made in the due course of business.

(b) This section does not apply to a loan covered by Section 253.096.

(c) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.104. Contribution to Political Party.

(a) A corporation or labor organization may make a contribution from its own property to a political party to be used as provided by Chapter 257.

(b) A corporation or labor organization may not knowingly make a contribution authorized by Subsection (a) during a period beginning on the 60th day before the date of a general election for state and county officers and continuing through the day of the election.

(c) A corporation or labor organization that knowingly makes a contribution in violation of this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree.

(Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.08, eff. Jan. 1, 1992)

Sec. 253.105. Contributions to Direct Expenditure Only Committees.

(a) A corporation or labor organization may make a political contribution from its own property to a political committee that:

(1) is not established or controlled by a candidate or an officeholder;

(2) makes or intends to make direct campaign expenditures;

(3) does not make or intend to make political contributions to:

(A) a candidate;

(B) an officeholder;

(C) a specific-purpose committee established or controlled by a candidate or an officeholder; or

(D) a political committee that makes or intends to make political contributions to a candidate, an officeholder, or a specific-purpose committee established or controlled by a candidate or an officeholder; and

(4) has filed an affidavit with the commission stating the committee's intention to operate as described by Subdivisions (2) and (3).

(b) A political contribution made by a corporation or labor organization under this section does not constitute a violation of Section 253.094(a) and the acceptance of the political contribution does not constitute a violation of Section 253.003(b).

(Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 209, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Subchapter E. Civil Liability

Sec. 253.131. Liability to Candidates.

(a) A person who knowingly makes or accepts a campaign contribution or makes a campaign expenditure in violation of this chapter is liable for damages as provided by this section.

(b) If the contribution or expenditure is in support of a candidate, each opposing candidate whose name appears on the ballot is entitled to recover damages under this section.

(c) If the contribution or expenditure is in opposition to a candidate, the candidate is entitled to recover damages under this section.

(d) In this section, "damages" means:

(1) twice the value of the unlawful contribution or expenditure; and

(2) reasonable attorney's fees incurred in the suit.

(e) Reasonable attorney's fees incurred in the suit may be awarded to the defendant if judgment is rendered in the defendant's favor.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.132. Liability to Political Committees.

(a) A corporation or labor organization that knowingly makes a campaign contribution to a political committee or a direct campaign expenditure in violation of Subchapter D is liable for damages as provided by this section to each political committee of opposing interest in the election in connection with which the contribution or expenditure is made.

(b) In this section, "damages" means:

(1) twice the value of the unlawful contribution or expenditure; and

(2) reasonable attorney's fees incurred in the suit.

(c) Reasonable attorney's fees incurred in the suit may be awarded to the defendant if judgment is rendered in the defendant's favor.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.133. Liability to State.

A person who knowingly makes or accepts a political contribution or makes a political expenditure in violation of this chapter is liable for damages to the state in the amount of triple the value of the unlawful contribution or expenditure.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 253.134. Civil Penalties Imposed by Commission.

This title does not prohibit the imposition of civil penalties by the commission in addition to criminal penalties or other sanctions imposed by law.

(Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.09, eff. Jan. 1, 1992)

*Subchapter F. Judicial Campaign Fairness Act***Sec. 253.151. Applicability of Subchapter.**

This subchapter applies only to a political contribution or political expenditure in connection with the office of:

- (1) chief justice or justice, supreme court;
- (2) presiding judge or judge, court of criminal appeals;
- (3) chief justice or justice, court of appeals;
- (4) district judge;
- (5) judge, statutory county court; or
- (6) judge, statutory probate court.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995)

Sec. 253.152. Definitions.

In this subchapter:

(1) "Child" means a person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes.

(2) "In connection with an election" means:

(A) with regard to a contribution that is designated in writing for a particular election, the election designated; or

(B) with regard to a contribution that is not designated in writing for a particular election, the next election for that office occurring after the contribution is made.

(3) "Judicial district" means the territory from which a judicial candidate is elected or appointed.

(4) "Law firm" means a partnership, limited liability partnership, limited liability company, professional corporation, or other entity organized for the practice of law.

(5) "Law firm group" means:

(A) a law firm;

(B) a general-purpose committee established or controlled by the law firm or a member of the law firm;

(C) a member of the law firm; and

(D) the spouse of a member of the law firm.

(6) "Member of a law firm" means:

(A) a person designated "of counsel" or "of the firm";

(B) a partner of the law firm, whether an individual or an entity;

(C) an associate of the law firm;

(D) a shareholder of the law firm, whether an individual or an entity; or

(E) an employee of the law firm

(7) "Statewide judicial office" means the office of chief justice or justice, supreme court, or presiding judge or judge, court of criminal appeals.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995; Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 479, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.153. Contribution Prohibited Except During Election Period.

(a) A judicial candidate or officeholder, a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a judicial candidate, or a specific-purpose committee for assisting a judicial officeholder may not knowingly accept a political contribution except during the period:

(1) beginning on:

(A) the 210th day before the date an application for a place on the ballot or for nomination by convention for the office is required to be filed, if the election is for a full term; or

(B) the later of the 210th day before the date an application for a place on the ballot or for nomination by convention for the office is required to be filed or the date a vacancy in the office occurs, if the election is for an unexpired term; and

(2) ending on the 120th day after the date of the election in which the candidate or officeholder last appeared on the ballot, regardless of whether the candidate or officeholder has an opponent in that election;

(b) Subsection (a)(2) does not apply to a political contribution that was made and accepted with the intent that it be used to defray expenses incurred in connection with an election, including the repayment of any debt that is:

(1) incurred directly by the making of a campaign expenditure during the period beginning on the date the application for a place on the ballot or for nomination by convention was required to be filed for the election in which the candidate last appeared on the ballot and ending on the date of that election; and

(2) subject to the restrictions prescribed by Sections 253.162 and 253.1621.

(c) Repealed.

(d) A person who violates this section is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed three times the amount of the political contributions accepted in violation of this section.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995; Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 479, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 1329, §§ 1, 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2009)

Sec. 253.154. Write-in Candidacy.

(a) A write-in candidate for judicial office or a specific-purpose committee for supporting a write-in candidate for judicial office may not knowingly accept a political contribution before the candidate files a declaration of write-in candidacy.

(b) A person who violates this section is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed three times the amount of the political contributions accepted in violation of this section.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995)

Sec. 253.1541. Acceptance of Political Contributions by Person Appointed to Fill Vacancy.

(a) This section applies only to a person appointed to fill a vacancy in an office covered by this subchapter who, at the time of appointment, does not hold another office covered by this subchapter.

(b) Notwithstanding Section 253.153, a person to whom this section applies may accept political contributions beginning on the date the person assumes the duties of office and ending on the 60th day after that date.

(Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 552, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Amended by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, §§ 2, 3, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.155. Contribution Limits.

(a) A judicial candidate or officeholder may not knowingly accept political contributions from a person that in the aggregate exceed the contribution limits prescribed by Subsection (b) in connection with each election in which the judicial candidate's name appears on the ballot.

(b) The contribution limits under this section are:

(1) for a statewide judicial office, \$5,000; or

(2) for any other judicial office:

(A) \$1,000, if the population of the judicial district is less than 250,000;

(B) \$2,500, if the population of the judicial district is 250,000 to one million; or

(C) \$5,000, if the population of the judicial district is more than one million.

(c) This section does not apply to a political contribution made by a general-purpose committee.

(d) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(1).

(d-1) In addition to the contribution limits imposed on each contributor under this section, a judicial candidate or officeholder may not accept a political contribution in excess of \$50 from a person if:

(1) the person is part of a law firm group; and

(2) the contribution, when aggregated with all political contributions accepted by the candidate or officeholder from the same law firm group in connection with the election, would exceed six times the applicable contribution limit under this section.

(e) A person who receives a political contribution that violates this section shall return the contribution to the contributor not later than the later of:

(1) the last day of the reporting period in which the contribution is received; or

(2) the fifth day after the date the contribution is received.

(f) A person who violates this section is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed three times the amount of the political contributions accepted in violation of this section.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995; Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 479, § 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1096, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, §§ 4, 17(1), eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.157. Limit on Contribution by General-Purpose Committees.

(a) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 172(2).

(a-1) A judicial candidate or officeholder may not knowingly accept political contributions from a general-purpose committee that, in the aggregate, exceed the contribution limits prescribed by this subsection in connection with an election in which the judicial candidate's name appears on the ballot. The contribution limits under this subsection are:

(1) for a statewide judicial office, \$25,000; or

(2) for any other judicial office, \$5,000.

(a-2) In addition to the contribution limits imposed on each contribution in Subsection (a-1), a judicial candidate or officeholder may not accept a political contribution in excess of \$50 from a general-purpose committee if the contribution, when aggregated with all political contributions from all general-purpose committees in connection with an election, would exceed:

(1) for a statewide judicial office, \$300,000;

(2) for the office of chief justice or justice, court of appeals:

(A) \$75,000, if the population of the judicial district is more than one million; or

(B) \$52,500, if the population of the judicial district is one million or less; or

(3) for an office other than an office included under Subdivision (1) or (2):

(A) \$52,500, if the population of the judicial district is more than one million;

(B) \$30,000, if the population of the judicial district is 250,000 to one million; or

(C) \$15,000, if the population of the judicial district is less than 250,000.

(b) A person who receives a political contribution that violates this section shall return the contribution to the contributor not later than the later of:

(1) the last day of the reporting period in which the contribution is received; or

(2) the fifth day after the date the contribution is received.

(c) A person who violates this section is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed three times the amount of the political contributions accepted in violation of this section.

(d) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(2).

(e) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(2). (Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995; Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 479, § 5, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 552, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 62, § 5.16, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1096, § 3, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, §§ 5, 6, 17(2), eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.158. Contribution by Spouse or Child.

(a) For purposes of this subchapter, a contribution by the spouse of an individual is not considered to be a contribution by the individual.

(b) For purposes of this subchapter, a contribution by a child of an individual is considered to be a contribution by the individual

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995; Amended by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.159. Exception to Contribution Limits.

Section 253.155 does not apply to an individual who is related to the candidate or officeholder within the second degree by consanguinity, as determined under Subchapter B, Chapter 573, Government Code.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995; Amended by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.160. Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(2).

Sec. 253.1601. Contribution to Certain Committees Considered Contribution to Candidate or Officeholder.

For purposes of Sections 253.155 and 253.157, a contribution to a specific-purpose committee for the purpose of supporting a judicial candidate, opposing the candidate's opponent, or assisting a judicial officeholder is considered to be a contribution to the candidate or officeholder.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995; Renumbered from V.T.C.A., Election Code § 253.156 and amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 479, § 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.161. Use of Contribution from Nonjudicial or Judicial Office Prohibited.

(a) A judicial candidate or officeholder, a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a judicial candidate, or a specific-purpose committee for assisting a judicial officeholder may not use a political contribution to make a campaign expenditure for judicial office or to make an officeholder expenditure in connection with a judicial office if the contribution was accepted while the candidate or officeholder:

(1) was a candidate for an office other than a judicial office; or

(2) held an office other than a judicial office, unless the person had become a candidate for judicial office and the contribution was made in connection with an election for judicial office.

(b) A candidate, officeholder, or specific-purpose committee for supporting, opposing, or assisting the candidate or officeholder may not use a political contribution to make a campaign expenditure for an office other than a judicial office or to make an officeholder expenditure in connection with an office other than a judicial office if the contribution was accepted while the candidate or officeholder:

(1) was a candidate for a judicial office; or

(2) held a judicial office, unless the person had become a candidate for another office and the contribution was made in connection with an election for judicial office.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(4).

(d) A person who violates this section is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed three times the amount of political contributions used in violation of this section.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995; Amended by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, §§ 8, 17(4), eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.1611. Certain Contributions by Judicial Candidates, Officeholders, and Committees Restricted.

(a) A judicial candidate or officeholder or a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a judicial candidate or assisting a judicial officeholder may not use a political contribution to knowingly make political contributions that in the aggregate exceed \$100 in a calendar year to a candidate or officeholder.

(b) A judicial candidate or a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a judicial candidate may not use a political contribution to knowingly make political contributions to a political committee in connection with a primary election.

(c) A judicial candidate or a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a judicial candidate may not use a political contribution to knowingly make a political contribution to a political committee that, when aggregated with each other political contribution to a political committee in connection with a general election, exceeds \$500.

(d) A judicial officeholder or a specific-purpose committee for assisting a judicial officeholder may not, in any calendar year in which the office held is not on the ballot, use a political contribution to knowingly make a political contribution to a

political committee that, when aggregated with each other political contribution to a political committee in that calendar year, exceeds \$250.

(e) This section does not apply to a political contribution made to the principal political committee of the state executive committee or a county executive committee of a political party that provides goods or services, including political advertising or a campaign communication, to or for the benefit of judicial candidates.

(e-1) This subsection applies only to a political party required to nominate candidates by primary election. This section does not apply to a political contribution made, for the purpose of sponsoring or attending an event, to a political committee affiliated with:

(1) an organization that has been designated as an auxiliary, coalition, or county chair association of a political party as provided by political party rule or state executive committee bylaw; or

(2) a local chapter of an organization described by Subdivision (1).

(f) Repealed.

(g) A person who violates this section is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed three times the amount of political contributions used in violation of this section.

(Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 479, § 7, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 937, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001; Acts 2017, 85th Leg., ch. 905, §§ 1 and 2, eff. June 15, 2017)

Sec. 253.1612. Certain Campaign Activities Authorized.

The Code of Judicial Conduct may not prohibit, and a judicial candidate may not be penalized for, a joint campaign activity conducted by two or more judicial candidates.

(Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 9, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.162. Restrictions on Reimbursement of Personal Funds and Payments on Certain Loans.

(a) A judicial candidate or officeholder who makes political expenditures from the person's personal funds or who accepts one or more political contributions in the form of a loan, including an extension of credit or guarantee of a loan or extension of credit, from one or more persons related to the candidate or officeholder within the second degree of affinity or consanguinity, as determined under Subchapter B, Chapter 573, Government Code, may not reimburse those personal funds or repay those loans from political contributions in amounts that in the aggregate exceed, for each election in which the person's name appears on the ballot:

(1) for a statewide judicial office, \$100,000; or

(2) for an office other than a statewide judicial office, five times the applicable contribution limit under Section 253.155.

(b) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(5).

(c) A person who is both a candidate and an officeholder may reimburse the person's personal funds in only one capacity.

(d) A person who violates this section is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed three times the amount by which the reimbursement made in violation of this section exceeds the applicable limit prescribed by Subsection (a).

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995; Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1096, § 5, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, §§ 10, 17(5), eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.1621. Application of Contribution and Reimbursement Limits to Certain Candidates.

(a) For purposes of the contribution limits prescribed by Section 253.155 or 253.157 and the limit on reimbursement of personal funds and repayment of certain loans prescribed by Section 253.162, the general and primary elections are considered separate elections for a candidate whose name appears on the ballot.

(b) For purposes of the contribution limits prescribed by Sections 253.155 and 253.157, and the limits on reimbursement of personal funds and repayment of certain loans prescribed by Section 253.162, a runoff election in which the candidate's name is on the ballot is considered a separate election.

(Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1096, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Amended by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 11, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.163. Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(6).

Sec. 253.164. Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(6).

Sec. 253.165. Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(6).

Sec. 253.166. Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(6).

Sec. 253.167. Certification of Population; Notice of Contribution Limits.

(a) For purposes of this subchapter only, not later than June 1 of each odd-numbered year, the commission shall:

(1) make a written certification of the population of each judicial district for which a candidate for judge or justice must file a campaign treasurer appointment with the commission; and

(2) deliver to the county clerk of each county a written certification of the county's population, if the county:

(A) comprises an entire judicial district under Chapter 26, Government Code; or

(B) has a statutory county court or statutory probate court, other than a multicounty statutory county court created under Subchapter D, Chapter 25, Government Code.

(b) Following certification of population under Subsection (a), the commission or county clerk, as appropriate, shall make available to each candidate for an office covered by this subchapter written notice of the contribution limits applicable to the office the candidate seeks.

(c) The commission shall post the written certification required by this section on the commission's Internet website. (Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995; Amended by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., ch. 1164, § 40, eff. Sept. 1, 2011; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, §§ 12, 13, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.168. Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(6).

Sec. 253.169. Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(6).

Sec. 253.170. Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(6).

Sec. 253.171. Contribution from or Direct Campaign Expenditure by Political Party.

A political expenditure for a generic get-out-the-vote campaign or to create and distribute for a written list of two or more candidates is not considered a contribution to a judicial candidate who benefits from the get-out-the-vote campaign or is included in the written list and is not subject to the limits of Section 253.155 or 253.157 if the get-out-the-vote campaign or written list:

- (1) identifies the party's candidates by name and office sought, office held, or photograph;
- (2) does not include any reference to the judicial philosophy or positions on issues of the party's judicial candidates; and
- (3) is not broadcast, cablecast, published in a newspaper or magazine, or placed on a billboard.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995; Amended by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 14, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 253.172. Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(6).

Sec. 253.173. Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(6).

Sec. 253.174. Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(6).

Sec. 253.175. Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(6).

Sec. 253.176. Civil Penalty.

(a) The commission may impose a civil penalty against a person as provided by this subchapter only after a formal hearing as provided by Subchapter E, Chapter 571, Government Code.

(b) The commission shall base the amount of the penalty on:

- (1) the seriousness of the violation;
- (2) the history of previous violations;
- (3) the amount necessary to deter future violations; and
- (4) any other matter that justice may require.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 17(7). (Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 1, eff. June 16, 1995; Amended by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, §§ 15, 17(7), eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

CHAPTER 254. POLITICAL REPORTING

Subchapter A. Recordkeeping

Sec. 254.001. Recordkeeping Required.

(a) Each candidate and each officeholder shall maintain a record of all reportable activity.

(b) Each campaign treasurer of a political committee shall maintain a record of all reportable activity.

(c) The record must contain the information that is necessary for filing the reports required by this chapter.

(d) A person required to maintain a record under this section shall preserve the record for at least two years beginning on the filing deadline for the report containing the information in the record.

(e) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Subchapter B. Political Reporting Generally

Sec. 254.031. General Contents of Reports.

(a) Except as otherwise provided by this chapter, each report filed under this chapter must include:

(1) the amount of political contributions, other than political contributions described by Subdivision (1-a), from each person that in the aggregate exceed \$50 and that are accepted during the reporting period by the person or committee required to file a report under this chapter, the full name and address of the person making the contributions, and the dates of the contributions;

(1-a) the amount of political contributions from each person that are made electronically and that are accepted during the reporting period by the person or committee required to file a report under this chapter, the full name and address of the person making the contributions, and the dates of the contributions;

(2) the amount of loans that are made during the reporting period for campaign or officeholder purposes to the person or committee required to file the report and that in the aggregate exceed \$50, the dates the loans are made, the interest rate, the maturity date, the type of collateral for the loans, if any, the full name and address of the person or financial institution making the loans, the full name and address, principal occupation, and name of the employer of each guarantor of the loans,

the amount of the loans guaranteed by each guarantor, and the aggregate principal amount of all outstanding loans as of the last day of the reporting period;

(3) the amount of political expenditures that in the aggregate exceed \$100 and that are made during the reporting period, the full name and address of the persons to whom the expenditures are made, and the dates and purposes of the expenditures;

(4) the amount of each payment made during the reporting period from a political contribution if the payment is not a political expenditure, the full name and address of the person to whom the payment is made, and the date and purpose of the payment;

(5) the total amount or a specific listing of the political contributions of \$50 or less accepted and the total amount or a specific listing of the political expenditures of \$50 or less made during the reporting period;

(6) the total amount of all political contributions accepted and the total amount of all political expenditures made during the reporting period;

(7) the name of each candidate or officeholder who benefits from a direct campaign expenditure made during the reporting period by the person or committee required to file the report, and the office sought or held, excluding a direct campaign expenditure that is made by the principal political committee of a political party on behalf of a slate of two or more nominees of that party;

(8) as of the last day of a reporting period for which the person is required to file a report, 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;

(9) 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 that is received during the reporting period and the amount of which exceeds \$100;

(10) any proceeds of the sale of an asset purchased with a political contribution that is received during the reporting period and the amount of which exceeds \$100;

(11) any investment purchased with a political contribution that is received during the reporting period and the amount of which exceeds \$100;

(12) any other gain from a political contribution that is received during the reporting period and the amount of which exceeds \$100; and

(13) the full name and address of each person from whom an amount described by Subdivision (9), (10), (11), or (12) is received, the date the amount is received, and the purpose for which the amount is received.

(a-1) A de minimis error in calculating or reporting a cash balance under Subsection (a)(8) is not a violation of this section.

(b) If no reportable activity occurs during a reporting period, the person required to file a report shall indicate that fact in the report.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.10, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.091, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., ch. 4, § 76.03, eff. July 19, 2011; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 1127, § 8, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 254.0311. Report by Legislative Caucus.

(a) A legislative caucus shall file a report of contributions and expenditures as required by this section.

(b) A report filed under this section must include:

(1) the amount of contributions from each person, other than a caucus member, that in the aggregate exceed \$50 and that are accepted during the reporting period by the legislative caucus, the full name and address of the person making the contributions, and the dates of the contributions;

(2) the amount of loans that are made during the reporting period to the legislative caucus and that in the aggregate exceed \$50, the dates the loans are made, the interest rate, the maturity date, the type of collateral for the loans, if any, the full name and address of the person or financial institution making the loans, the full name and address, principal occupation, and name of the employer of each guarantor of the loans, the amount of the loans guaranteed by each guarantor, and the aggregate principal amount of all outstanding loans as of the last day of the reporting period;

(3) the amount of expenditures that in the aggregate exceed \$50 and that are made during the reporting period, the full name and address of the persons to whom the expenditures are made, and the dates and purposes of the expenditures;

(4) the total amount or a specific listing of contributions of \$50 or less accepted from persons other than caucus members and the total amount or a specific listing of expenditures of \$50 or less made during the reporting period; and

(5) the total amount of all contributions accepted, including total contributions from caucus members, and the total amount of all expenditures made during the reporting period.

(c) If no reportable activity occurs during a reporting period, the legislative caucus shall indicate that fact in the report.

(d) A legislative caucus shall file with the commission two reports for each year.

(e) The first report shall be filed not later than July 15. The report covers the period beginning January 1 or the day the legislative caucus is organized, as applicable, and continuing through June 30.

(f) The second report shall be filed not later than January 15. The report covers the period beginning July 1 or the day the legislative caucus is organized, as applicable, and continuing through December 31.

(g) A legislative caucus shall maintain a record of all reportable activity under this section and shall preserve the record for at least two years beginning on the filing deadline for the report containing the information in the record.

(h) In this section, "legislative caucus" has the meaning assigned by Section 253.0341.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 43, § 2, eff. Aug. 28, 1995)

Sec. 254.0312. Best Efforts.

(a) A person required to file a report under this chapter is considered to be in compliance with Section 254.0612, 254.0912, or 254.1212 only if the person or the person's campaign treasurer shows that the person has used best efforts to obtain, maintain, and report the information required by those sections. A person is considered to have used best efforts to obtain, maintain, and report that information if the person or the person's campaign treasurer complies with this section.

(b) Each written solicitation for political contributions from an individual must include:

(1) a clear request for the individual's full name and address, the individual's principal occupation or job title, and the full name of the individual's employer; and

(2) an accurate statement of state law regarding the collection and reporting of individual contributor information, such as:

(A) "State law requires (certain candidates, officeholders, or political committees, as applicable) to use best efforts to collect and report the full name and address, principal occupation or job title, and full name of employer of individuals whose contributions equal or exceed \$500 in a reporting period."; or

(B) "To comply with state law, (certain candidates, officeholders, or political committees, as applicable) must use best efforts to obtain, maintain, and report the full name and address, principal occupation or job title, and full name of employer of individuals whose contributions equal or exceed \$500 in a reporting period."

(c) For each political contribution received from an individual that, when aggregated with all other political contributions received from the individual during the reporting period, equals or exceeds \$500 and for which the information required by Section 254.0612, 254.0912, or 254.1212 is not provided, the person must make at least one oral or written request for the missing information. A request under this subsection:

(1) must be made not later than the 30th day after the date the contribution is received;

(2) must include a clear and conspicuous statement that complies with Subsection (b);

(3) if made orally, must be documented in writing; and

(4) may not be made in conjunction with a solicitation for an additional political contribution.

(d) A person must report any information required by Section 254.0612, 254.0912, or 254.1212 that is not provided by the individual making the political contribution and that the person has in the person's records of political contributions or previous reports under this chapter.

(e) A person who receives information required by Section 254.0612, 254.0912, or 254.1212 after the filing deadline for the report on which the contribution is reported must include the missing information on the next report the person is required to file under this chapter.

(Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.10, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Sec. 254.0313. Omission of Address for Judge and Spouse.

(a) In this section, "federal judge" and "state judge" have the meanings assigned by Section 13.0021.

(b) On receiving notice from the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System of a judge's qualification for office or on receipt of a written request from a federal judge, state judge, or spouse of a federal or state judge, the commission shall remove or redact the residence address of a federal

judge, a state judge, or the spouse of a federal or state judge from any report filed by the judge in the judge's capacity or made available on the Internet under this chapter.

(Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 518, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 254.032. Nonreportable Personal Travel Expense.

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

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.033. Nonreportable Personal Service.

A political contribution consisting of an individual's personal service is not required to be reported under this chapter if the individual receives no compensation for the service.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.034. Time of Accepting Contribution.

(a) A determination to accept or refuse a political contribution that is received by a candidate, officeholder, or political committee shall be made not later than the end of the reporting period during which the contribution is received.

(b) If the determination to accept or refuse a political contribution is not made before the time required by Subsection (a), for purposes of this chapter, the contribution is considered to have been accepted on the last day of that reporting period.

(c) A political contribution that is received but not accepted shall be returned to the contributor not later than the 30th day after the deadline for filing a report for the reporting period during which the contribution is received. A contribution not returned within that time is considered to be accepted.

(d) A candidate, officeholder, or political committee commits an offense if the person knowingly fails to return a political contribution as required by Subsection (c).

(e) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 2, § 7.16, eff. Aug. 28, 1989)

Sec. 254.035. Time of Making Expenditure.

(a) For purposes of reporting under this chapter, a political expenditure is not considered to have been made until the amount is readily determinable by the person making the expenditure, except as provided by Subsection (b).

(b) If the character of an expenditure is such that under normal business practice the amount is not disclosed until receipt of a periodic bill, the expenditure is not considered made until the date the bill is received.

(c) The amount of a political expenditure made by credit card is readily determinable by the person making the expenditure on the date the person receives the credit card statement that includes the expenditure.

(d) Subsection (c) does not apply to a political expenditure made by credit card during the period covered by a report required to be filed under Section 254.064(b) or (c), 254.124(b) or (c), or 254.154(b) or (c).

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.11, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Sec. 254.036. Form of Report; Affidavit; Mailing of Forms.

(a) Each report filed under this chapter with an authority other than the commission must be in a format prescribed by the commission. A report filed with the commission that is not required to be filed by computer diskette, modem, or other means of electronic transfer must be on a form prescribed by the commission and written in black ink or typed with black typewriter ribbon or, if the report is a computer printout, the printout must conform to the same format and paper size as the form prescribed by the commission.

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c) or (e), each report filed under this chapter with the commission must be filed by computer diskette, modem, or other means of electronic transfer, using computer software provided by the commission or computer software that meets commission specifications for a standard file format.

(c) A candidate, officeholder, or political committee that is required to file reports with the commission may file reports that comply with Subsection (a) if:

(1) the candidate, officeholder, or campaign treasurer of the committee files with the commission an affidavit stating that the candidate, officeholder, or committee, an agent of the candidate, officeholder, or committee, or a person with whom the candidate, officeholder, or committee contracts does not use computer equipment to keep the current records of political contributions, political expenditures, or persons making political contributions to the candidate, officeholder, or committee; and

(2) the candidate, officeholder, or committee does not, in a calendar year, accept political contributions that in the aggregate exceed \$20,000 or make political expenditures that in the aggregate exceed \$20,000.

(c-1) An affidavit under Subsection (c) must be filed with each report filed under Subsection (a). The affidavit must include a statement that the candidate, officeholder, or political committee understands that the candidate, officeholder, or committee shall file reports as required by Subsection (b) if:

(1) the candidate, officeholder, or committee, a consultant of the candidate, officeholder, or committee, or a person with whom the candidate, officeholder, or committee contracts uses computer equipment for a purpose described by Subsection (c); or

(2) the candidate, officeholder, or committee exceeds \$20,000 in political contributions or political expenditures in a calendar year.

(d) Repealed by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.26.

(e) A candidate for an office described by Section 252.005(5) or a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing only candidates for an office described by Section 252.005(5) or a measure described by Section 252.007(5) may file reports that comply with Subsection (a).

(f) In prescribing the format of a report filed under this chapter with an authority other than the commission, the commission shall ensure that:

(1) a report may be filed:

(A) by first class United States mail or common or contract carrier;

(B) by personal delivery; or

(C) by electronic filing, if the authority with whom the report is required to be filed has adopted rules and procedures to provide for the electronic filing of the report and the report is filed in accordance with those rules and procedures; and

(2) an authority with whom a report is electronically filed issues an electronic receipt for the report to the person filing the report.

(g) Repealed by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.26.

(h) Each report filed under this chapter that is not filed by electronic transfer must be accompanied by an affidavit executed by the person required to file the report. The affidavit must contain the statement: "I swear, or affirm, under penalty of perjury, that the accompanying report is true and correct and includes all information required to be reported by me under Title 15, Election Code." Each report filed under this chapter by electronic transfer must be under oath by the person required to file the report and must contain, in compliance with commission specifications, the digitized signature of the person required to file the report. A report filed under this chapter is considered to be under oath by the person required to file the report, and the person is subject to prosecution under Chapter 37, Penal Code, regardless of the absence of or a defect in the affidavit.

(i) Each person required to file reports with the commission that comply with Subsection (b) shall file with the commission a written statement providing the manner of electronic transfer that the person will use to file the report. A statement under this subsection must be filed not later than the 30th day before the filing deadline for the first report a person is required to file under Subsection (b). A person who intends to change the manner of filing described by the person's most recent statement shall notify the commission of the change not later than the 30th day before the filing deadline for the report to which the change applies. If a person does not file a statement under this subsection, the commission may accept as authentic a report filed in any manner that complies with Subsection (b). If the commission receives a report that is not filed in the manner described by the person's most recent statement under this subsection, the commission shall promptly notify the person in writing that the commission has received a report filed in a different manner than expected.

(j) As part of the notification required by Section 251.033, the commission shall mail the appropriate forms to each person required to file a report with the commission during that reporting period.

(k) The commission shall prescribe forms for purposes of legislative caucus reports under Section 254.0311 that are separate and distinct from forms for other reports under this chapter.

(l) This section applies to a report that is filed electronically or otherwise.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.11, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 43, § 3, eff. Aug. 28, 1995; Acts

1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1134, §§ 6, 7, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1434, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, §§ 2.12, 2.26, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 1225, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2005; Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., ch. 1009, §§ 3, 6, eff. June 17, 2011; Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., ch. 894, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2013)

Sec. 254.0362. Use of Publicly Accessible Computer Terminal for Preparation of Reports.

(a) Except as provided by Subsection (d), a person who is required to file reports under this chapter may use a publicly accessible computer terminal that has Internet access and web browser software to prepare the reports.

(b) A public entity may prescribe reasonable restrictions on the use of a publicly accessible computer terminal for preparation of reports under this chapter, except that a public entity may not prohibit a person from using a computer terminal for preparation of reports during the public entity's regular business hours if the person requests to use the computer terminal less than 48 hours before a reporting deadline to which the person is subject.

(c) This section does not require a public entity to provide a person with consumable materials, including paper and computer diskettes, in conjunction with the use of a publicly accessible computer terminal.

(d) An officeholder may not use a computer issued to the officeholder for official use to prepare a report under this title.

(e) In this section:

(1) "Public entity" means a state agency, city, county, or independent school district.

(2) "Publicly accessible computer terminal" means a computer terminal that is normally available for use by members of the public and that is owned by a state agency, an independent school district, or a public library operated by a city or county. (Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1434, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1999)

Sec. 254.037. Filing Deadline.

(a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), the deadline for filing a report required by this chapter is 5 p.m. on the last day permitted under this chapter for filing the report.

(b) The deadline for filing a report electronically with the commission as required by this chapter is midnight on the last day for filing the report.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2007, 80th Leg., ch. 472, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2007)

Sec. 254.038. Special Report Near Election by Certain Candidates and Political Committees.

(a) In addition to other reports required by this chapter, the following persons shall file additional reports during the period beginning the ninth day before election day and ending at 12 noon on the day before election day:

(1) a candidate for an office specified by Section 252.005(1) who accepts political contributions from a person that in the aggregate exceed \$1,000 during that reporting period; and

(2) a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a candidate described by Subdivision (1) and that accepts political contributions from a person that in the aggregate exceed \$1,000 during that reporting period.

(b) Each report required by this section must include the amount of the contributions specified by Subsection (a), the full name and address of the person making the contributions, and the dates of the contributions.

(c) A report under this section shall be filed electronically, by telegram or telephonic facsimile machine, or by hand, in the form required by Section 254.036. The commission must receive a report under this section filed by telegram, telephonic facsimile machine, or hand not later than 5 p.m. of the first business day after the date the contribution is accepted. The commission must receive a report under this section filed electronically not later than midnight of the first business day after the date the contribution is accepted. A report under this section is not required to be accompanied by the affidavit required under Section 254.036(h) or to be submitted on a form prescribed by the commission. A report under this section that complies with Section 254.036(a) must be accompanied by an affidavit under Section 254.036(c)(1) unless the candidate or committee has submitted an affidavit under Section 254.036(c)(1) with another report filed in connection with the election for which a report is required under this section.

(d) To the extent of a conflict between this section and Section 254.036, this section controls.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 994, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.14, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1428, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.13, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 174, §§ 1, 2, eff. Oct. 1, 2005; Acts 2007, 80th Leg., ch. 472, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2007)

Sec. 254.039. Special Report Near Election by Certain General-Purpose Committees.

(a) In addition to other reports required by this chapter, a general-purpose committee shall file additional reports during the period beginning the ninth day before election day and ending at 12 noon on the day before election day if the committee:

(1) accepts political contributions from a person that in the aggregate exceed \$5,000 during that reporting period; or

(2) makes direct campaign expenditures supporting or opposing either a single candidate that in the aggregate exceed \$1,000 or a group of candidates that in the aggregate exceed \$15,000 during that reporting period.

(a-1) A report under this section shall be filed electronically, by telegram or telephonic facsimile machine, or by hand, in the form required by Section 254.036. The commission must receive a report under this section not later than 5 p.m. of the first business day after the date the contribution is accepted or the expenditure is made. A report under this section is not required to be accompanied by the affidavit required under Section 254.036(h) or to be submitted on a form prescribed by the commission. A report under this section that complies with Section 254.036(a) must be accompanied by an affidavit under Section 254.036(c)(1) unless the committee has submitted an

affidavit under Section 254.036(c)(1) with another report filed in connection with the election for which a report is required under this section.

(a-2) Each report required by Subsection (a)(1) must include the amount of the contributions specified by that subsection, the full name and address of the person making the contributions, and the dates of the contributions.

(b) Each report required by Subsection (a)(2) must include the amount of the expenditures, the full name and address of the persons to whom the expenditures are made, and the dates and purposes of the expenditures.

(c) To the extent of a conflict between this section and Section 254.036, this section controls.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 994, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1993; 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.15, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 174, §§ 3, 4, eff. Oct. 1, 2005; Acts 2007, 80th Leg., ch. 1294, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2007)

Sec. 254.0391. Report During Special Legislative Session.

(a) A statewide officeholder, a member of the legislature, or a specific-purpose committee for supporting, opposing, or assisting a statewide officeholder or member of the legislature, or a candidate for statewide office or the legislature or a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing the candidate, that accepts a political contribution during the period beginning on the date the governor signs the proclamation calling a special legislative session and continuing through the date of final adjournment shall report the contribution to the commission not later than the 30th day after the date of final adjournment.

(b) A determination to accept or refuse the political contribution shall be made not later than the third day after the date the contribution is received.

(c) Each report required by this section must include the amount of the political contribution, the full name and address of the person making the contribution, and the date of the contribution.

(d) A report is not required under this section if a person covered by Subsection (a) is required to file another report under this chapter not later than the 10th day after the date a report required under this section would be due.

(Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.12, eff. Jan. 1, 1992)

Sec. 254.040. Preservation of Reports; Record of Inspection.

(a) Each report filed under this chapter shall be preserved by the authority with whom it is filed for at least two years after the date it is filed.

(b) Each time a person requests to inspect a report, the commission shall place in the file a statement of the person's name and address, whom the person represents, and the date of the request. The commission shall retain that statement in the file for one year after the date the requested report is filed. This subsection does not apply to a request to inspect a report by:

(1) a member or employee of the commission acting on official business; or

(2) an individual acting on the individual's own behalf. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1134, § 8, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 254.0401. Availability of Reports on Internet.

(a) The commission shall make each report filed with the commission under Section 254.036(b) available to the public on the Internet not later than the second business day after the date the report is filed.

(a-1) The county clerk of a county with a population of 800,000 or more shall make a report filed with the clerk by a candidate, officeholder, or specific-purpose committee under this subchapter in connection with a county office or the office of county commissioner available to the public on the county's Internet website not later than the fifth business day after the date the report is received.

(b) Repealed by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., ch. 847, § 3.

(c) The clerk of a municipality with a population of 500,000 or more shall make a report filed with the clerk by a candidate, officeholder, or specific-purpose committee under this subchapter in connection with the office of mayor or member of the municipality's governing body available to the public on the municipality's Internet website not later than the fifth business day after the date the report is received.

(d) The access allowed by this section to reports is in addition to the public's access to the information through other electronic or print distribution of the information.

(e) Before making a report filed under Section 254.036(b) available on the Internet, the commission shall remove each portion, other than city, state, and zip code, of the address of a person listed as having made a political contribution to the person filing the report. The address information removed must remain available on the report maintained in the commission's office but may not be available electronically at that office.

(f) The commission shall clearly state on the Internet website on which reports are provided that reports filed by an independent candidate, a third-party candidate, or a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing an independent or third-party candidate will not be available if the candidate or committee has not yet filed a report.

(g) Electronic report data saved in a temporary storage location of the authority with whom the report is filed for later retrieval and editing before the report is filed is confidential and may not be disclosed. After the report is filed with the authority, the information disclosed in the filed report is public information to the extent provided by this title.

(Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1434, § 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, §§ 2.14, 2.26, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 567, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., ch. 847, §§ 1, 2, 3, eff. Sept. 1, 2013; Acts 2017, 85th Leg., ch. 249, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2017)

Sec. 254.04011. Availability of Reports of School Trustees on Internet.

(a) This section applies only to a school district:

(1) located wholly or partly in a municipality with a population of more than 500,000; and

(2) with a student enrollment of more than 15,000.

(b) A report filed under this chapter by a member of the board of trustees of a school district, a candidate for membership on the board of trustees of a school district, or a specific-purpose committee for supporting, opposing, or assisting a candidate or member of a board of trustees of a school district must be posted on the Internet website of the school district.

(c) A report to which Subsection (b) applies must be available to the public on the Internet website not later than the fifth business day after the date the report is filed with the school district.

(d) The access allowed by this section to reports is in addition to the public's access to the information through other electronic or print distribution of the information.

(e) Before making a report available on the Internet under this section, the school district may remove each portion, other than city, state, and zip code, of the address of a person listed as having made a political contribution to the person filing the report. If the address information is removed as permitted by this subsection, the information must remain available on the report maintained in the school district's office.

(Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., ch. 1272, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2011)

Sec. 254.0402. Public Inspection of Reports.

(a) Notwithstanding Section 552.222(a), Government Code, the authority with whom a report is filed under this chapter may not require a person examining the report to provide any information or identification.

(b) The commission shall make information from reports filed with the commission under Section 254.036(b) available by electronic means, including:

- (1) providing access to computer terminals at the commission's office;
- (2) providing information on computer diskette for purchase at a reasonable cost; and
- (3) providing modem or other electronic access to the information.

(Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1434, § 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1999)

Sec. 254.0405. Amendment of Filed Report.

(a) A person who files a semiannual report under this chapter may amend the report.

(b) A semiannual report that is amended before the eighth day after the date the original report was filed is considered to have been filed on the date on which the original report was filed.

(c) A semiannual report that is amended on or after the eighth day after the original report was filed is considered to have been filed on the date on which the original report was filed if:

- (1) the amendment is made before any complaint is filed with regard to the subject of the amendment; and
- (2) the original report was made in good faith and without an intent to mislead or to misrepresent the information contained in the report.

(Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., ch. 561, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2011)

Sec. 254.041. Criminal Penalty for Untimely or Incomplete Report.

(a) A person who is required by this chapter to file a report commits an offense if the person knowingly fails:

- (1) to file the report on time;
- (2) to file a report by computer diskette, modem, or other means of electronic transfer, if the person is required to file reports that comply with Section 254.036(b); or
- (3) to include in the report information that is required by this title to be included.

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), an offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor.

(c) A violation of Subsection (a)(3) by a candidate or officeholder is a Class A misdemeanor if the report fails to include information required by Section 254.061(3) or 254.091(2), as applicable.

(d) It is an exception to the application of Subsection (a)(3) that:

- (1) the information was required to be included in a semiannual report; and
- (2) the person amended the report within the time prescribed by Section 254.0405(b) or under the circumstances described by Section 254.0405(c).

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1434, § 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Act; 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1420, § 4A.001, eff. Sept. 1, 2001; Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., ch. 561, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2011)

Sec. 254.042. Civil Penalty for Late Report.

(a) The commission shall determine from any available evidence whether a report required to be filed with the commission under this chapter is late. On making that determination, the commission shall immediately mail a notice of the determination to the person required to file the report.

(b) If a report other than a report under Section 254.064(c), 254.124(c), or 254.154(c) or the first report under Section 254.063 or 254.123 that is required to be filed following the primary or general election is determined to be late, the person required to file the report is liable to the state for a civil penalty of \$500. If a report under Section 254.064(c), 254.124(c), or 254.154(c) or the first report under Section 254.063 or 254.153 that is required to be filed following the primary or general election is determined to be late, the person required to file the report is liable to the state for a civil penalty of \$500 for the first day the report is late and \$100 for each day thereafter that the report is late. If a report is more than 30 days late, the commission shall issue a warning of liability by registered mail to the person required to file the report. If the penalty is not paid before the 10th day after the date on which the warning is received, the person is liable for a civil penalty in an amount determined by commission rule, but not to exceed \$10,000.

(c) A penalty paid voluntarily under this section shall be deposited in the State Treasury to the credit of the General Revenue Fund.

(d) Repealed by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.20, eff. Jan. 1, 1992.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.13, eff. Jan. 1, 1992;

Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.16, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.15, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2007, 80th Leg., ch. 1294, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2007)

Sec. 254.043. Action to Require Compliance.

(a) This section applies only to:

(1) a person required to file reports under this chapter with the commission; or

(2) a person required to file reports under this chapter with an authority other than the commission in connection with an office of a political subdivision in a county with a population of at least 500,000.

(b) A resident of the territory served by an office may bring an action for injunctive relief against a candidate for or holder of that office or a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing such a candidate or assisting such an officeholder to require the person to file a report under this chapter that the person has failed to timely file.

(c) An action under this section may be brought against a person required to file reports under this chapter only if:

(1) the report is not filed before the 60th day after the date on which the report was required to be filed;

(2) not earlier than the 60th day after the date on which the report was required to be filed, the person bringing the action delivers written notice by certified mail to the person required to file the report, stating:

(A) the person's intention to bring an action under this section if the report is not filed; and

(B) that an action to require the filing of the report may be filed if the report is not filed before the 30th day after the date on which the person required to file the report receives the notice; and

(3) the report is not filed before the 30th day after the date on which the person required to file the report receives the notice required by Subdivision (2).

(d) The court shall award a plaintiff who prevails in an action under this section reasonable attorney's fees and court costs.

(Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.16, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Subchapter C. Reporting by Candidate

Sec. 254.061. Additional Contents of Reports.

In addition to the contents required by Section 254.031, each report by a candidate must include:

(1) the candidate's full name and address, the office sought, and the identity and date of the election for which the report is filed;

(2) the campaign treasurer's name, residence or business street address, and telephone number;

(3) for each political committee from which the candidate received notice under Section 254.128 or 254.161:

(A) the committee's full name and address;

(B) an indication of whether the committee is a general-purpose committee or a specific-purpose committee; and

(C) the full name and address of the committee's campaign treasurer;

(4) on a separate page or pages of the report, the identification of any payment from political contributions made to a business in which the candidate has a participating interest of more than 10 percent, holds a position on the governing body of the business, or serves as an officer of the business.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.14, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., ch. 1009, § 4, eff. June 17, 2011)

Sec. 254.0611. Additional Contents of Reports by Certain Judicial Candidates.

(a) In addition to the contents required by Sections 254.031 and 254.061, each report by a candidate for a judicial office covered by Subchapter F, Chapter 253, must include:

(1) the total amount of political contributions, including interest or other income, maintained in one or more accounts in which political contributions are deposited as of the last day of the reporting period;

(2) for each individual from whom the person filing the report has accepted political contributions that in the aggregate exceed \$50 and that are accepted during the reporting period:

(A) the principal occupation and job title of the individual and the full name of the employer of the individual or of the law firm of which the individual or the individual's spouse is a member, if any; or

(B) if the individual is a child, the full name of the law firm of which either of the individual's parents is a member, if any;

(3) a specific listing of each asset valued at \$500 or more that was purchased with political contributions and on hand as of the last day of the reporting period;

(4) for each political contribution accepted by the person filing the report but not received as of the last day of the reporting period:

(A) the full name and address of the person making the contribution;

(B) the amount of the contribution; and

(C) the date of the contribution; and

(5) for each outstanding loan to the person filing the report as of the last day of the reporting period:

(A) the full name and address of the person or financial institution making the loan; and

(B) the full name and address of each guarantor of the loan other than the candidate.

(b) In this section:

(1) "Child" and "law firm" have the meanings assigned by Section 253.152.

(2) "Member" has the meanings assigned by Section 253.152.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 3, eff. July 1, 1995; Amended by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 384, § 16, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 254.0612. Additional Contents of Reports by Candidate for Statewide Executive Office or Legislative Office.

In addition to the contents required by Sections 254.031 and 254.061, each report by a candidate for a statewide office in the executive branch or a legislative office must include, for each individual from whom the person filing the report has

accepted political contributions that in the aggregate equal or exceed \$500 and that are accepted during the reporting period:

- (1) the individual's principal occupation or job title; and
- (2) the full name of the individual's employer.

(Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.17, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Sec. 254.062. Certain Officeholder Activity Included.

If an officeholder who becomes a candidate has reportable activity that is not reported under Subchapter D before the end of the period covered by the first report the candidate is required to file under this subchapter, the reportable activity shall be included in the first report filed under this subchapter instead of in a report filed under Subchapter D.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.063. Semiannual Reporting Schedule for Candidate.

(a) A candidate shall file two reports for each year as provided by this section.

(b) The first report shall be filed not later than July 15. The report covers the period beginning January 1, the day the candidate's campaign treasurer appointment is filed, or the first day after the period covered by the last report required to be filed under this subchapter, as applicable, and continuing through June 30.

(c) The second report shall be filed not later than January 15. The report covers the period beginning July 1, the day the candidate's campaign treasurer appointment is filed, or the first day after the period covered by the last report required to be filed under this subchapter, as applicable, and continuing through December 31.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.064. Additional Reports of Opposed Candidate.

(a) In addition to other required reports, for each election in which a person is a candidate and has an opponent whose name is to appear on the ballot, the person shall file two reports.

(b) The first report must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not later than the 30th day before election day. The report covers the period beginning the day the candidate's campaign treasurer appointment is filed or the first day after the period covered by the last report required to be filed under this chapter, as applicable, and continuing through the 40th day before election day.

(c) The second report must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not later than the eighth day before election day. The report covers the period beginning the 39th day before election day and continuing through the 10th day before election day.

(d) If a person becomes an opposed candidate after a reporting period prescribed by Subsection (b) or (c), the person's first report must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not later than the regular deadline for the report covering the period during which the person

becomes an opposed candidate. The period covered by the first report begins the day the candidate's campaign treasurer appointment is filed.

(e) In addition to other required reports, an opposed candidate in a runoff election shall file one report for that election. The runoff election report must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not later than the eighth day before runoff election day. The report covers the period beginning the ninth day before the date of the main election and continuing through the 10th day before runoff election day.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 245, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2007, 80th Leg., ch. 673, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2007)

Sec. 254.065. Final Report.

(a) If a candidate expects no reportable activity in connection with the candidacy to occur after the period covered by a report filed under this subchapter, the candidate may designate the report as a "final" report.

(b) The designation of a report as a final report:

(1) relieves the candidate of the duty to file additional reports under this subchapter, except as provided by Subsection (c); and

(2) terminates the candidate's campaign treasurer appointment.

(c) If, after a candidate's final report is filed, reportable activity with respect to the candidacy occurs, the candidate shall file the appropriate reports under this subchapter and is otherwise subject to the provisions of this title applicable to candidates. A report filed under this subsection may be designated as a final report.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.066. Authority With Whom Reports Filed.

Reports under this subchapter shall be filed with the authority with whom the candidate's campaign treasurer appointment is required to be filed.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 511, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 518, § 1, eff. June 19, 2009)

Subchapter D. Reporting by Officeholder

Sec. 254.091. Additional Contents of Reports.

In addition to the contents required by Section 254.031, each report by an officeholder must include:

(1) the officeholder's full name and address and the office held;

(2) for each political committee from which the officeholder received notice under Section 254.128 or 254.161:

(A) the committee's full name and address;

(B) an indication of whether the committee is a general-purpose committee or a specific-purpose committee; and

(C) the full name and address of the committee's campaign treasurer; and

(3) on a separate page or pages of the report, the identification of any payment from political contributions made to a business in which the officeholder has a participating interest of more than 10 percent, holds a position on the governing body of the business, or serves as an officer of the business.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.15, eff. Jan. 1, 1992)

Sec. 254.0911. Additional Contents of Reports by Certain Judicial Officeholders.

In addition to the contents required by Sections 254.031 and 254.091, each report by a holder of a judicial office covered by Subchapter F, Chapter 253, must include the contents prescribed by Section 254.0611.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 4, eff. July 1, 1995)

Sec. 254.0912. Additional Contents of Reports by Statewide Executive Officeholders and Legislative Officeholders.

In addition to the contents required by Sections 254.031 and 254.091, each report by a holder of a statewide office in the executive branch or a legislative office must include the contents prescribed by Section 254.0612.

(Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.18, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Sec. 254.092. Certain Officeholder Expenditures Excluded.

An officeholder is not required to report officeholder expenditures made from the officeholder's personal funds, except as provided by Section 253.035(h).

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.16, eff. Jan. 1, 1992)

Sec. 254.093. Semiannual Reporting Schedule for Officeholder.

(a) An officeholder shall file two reports for each year as provided by this section.

(b) The first report shall be filed not later than July 15. The report covers the period beginning January 1, the day the officeholder takes office, or the first day after the period covered by the last report required to be filed under this chapter, as applicable, and continuing through June 30.

(c) The second report shall be filed not later than January 15. The report covers the period beginning July 1, the day the officeholder takes office, or the first day after the period covered by the last report required to be filed under this chapter, as applicable, and continuing through December 31. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.094. Report Following Appointment of Campaign Treasurer.

(a) An officeholder who appoints a campaign treasurer shall file a report as provided by this section.

(b) The report covers the period beginning the first day after the period covered by the last report required to be filed

under this chapter or the day the officeholder takes office, as applicable, and continuing through the day before the date the officeholder's campaign treasurer is appointed.

(c) The report shall be filed not later than the 15th day after the date the officeholder's campaign treasurer is appointed.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.095. Report Not Required.

If at the end of any reporting period prescribed by this subchapter an officeholder who is required to file a report with an authority other than the commission has not accepted political contributions that in the aggregate exceed \$500 or made political expenditures that in the aggregate exceed \$500, the officeholder is not required to file a report covering that period. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.17, eff. Aug. 30, 1993)

Sec. 254.096. Officeholder Who Becomes Candidate.

An officeholder who becomes a candidate is subject to Subchapter C during each period covered by a report required to be filed under Subchapter C.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.097. Authority With Whom Reports Filed.

Reports under this subchapter shall be filed with the authority with whom a campaign treasurer appointment by a candidate for the office held by the officeholder is required to be filed.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 511, § 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 518, § 1, eff. June 19, 2009)

Subchapter E. Reporting by Specific Purpose Committee

Sec. 254.121. Additional Contents of Reports.

In addition to the contents required by Section 254.031, each report by a campaign treasurer of a specific-purpose committee must include:

- (1) the committee's full name and address;
- (2) the full name, residence or business street address, and telephone number of the committee's campaign treasurer;
- (3) the identity and date of the election for which the report is filed, if applicable;
- (4) the name of each candidate and each measure supported or opposed by the committee, indicating for each whether the committee supports or opposes;
- (5) the name of each officeholder assisted by the committee;
- (6) the amount of each political expenditure in the form of a political contribution that is made to a candidate, officeholder, or another political committee and that is returned to the committee during the reporting period, the name of the person to whom the expenditure was originally made, and the date it is returned;

(7) on a separate page or pages of the report, the identification of any payment from political contributions made to a business in which the candidate or officeholder has a participating interest of more than 10 percent, holds a position on the governing body of the business, or serves as an officer of the business; and

(8) on a separate page or pages of the report, the identification of any contribution from a corporation or labor organization made and accepted under Subchapter D, Chapter 253. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.17, eff. Jan. 1, 1992)

Sec. 254.1211. Additional Contents of Reports of Certain Committees.

In addition to the contents required by Sections 254.031 and 254.121, each report by a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a candidate for or assisting a holder of a judicial office covered by Subchapter F, Chapter 253, must include the contents prescribed by Section 254.0611. (Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 5, eff. July 1, 1995)

Sec. 254.1212. Additional Contents of Reports of Committee Supporting or Opposing Candidate for Statewide Executive Officeholders or Legislative Officeholders or Assisting Statewide Executive Officeholders or Legislative Officeholders.

In addition to the contents required by Sections 254.031 and 254.121, each report by a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a candidate for or assisting a holder of a statewide office in the executive branch or a legislative office must include the contents prescribed by Section 254.0612. (Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.19, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Sec. 254.122. Involvement in More Than One Election by Certain Committees.

If a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing more than one candidate becomes involved in more than one election for which the reporting periods prescribed by Section 254.124 overlap, the reportable activity that occurs during the overlapping period is not required to be included in a report filed after the first report in which the activity is required to be reported. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.123. Semiannual Reporting Schedule for Committee.

(a) The campaign treasurer of a specific-purpose committee shall file two reports for each year as provided by this section.

(b) The first report shall be filed not later than July 15. The report covers the period beginning January 1, the day the committee's campaign treasurer appointment is filed, or the first day after the period covered by the last report required to be filed under this subchapter, as applicable, and continuing through June 30.

(c) The second report shall be filed not later than January 15. The report covers the period beginning July 1, the day the committee's campaign treasurer appointment is filed, or the first day after the period covered by the last report required to be filed under this subchapter, as applicable, and continuing through December 31.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.124. Additional Reports of Committee for Supporting or Opposing Candidate or Measure.

(a) In addition to other required reports, for each election in which a specific-purpose committee supports or opposes a candidate or measure, the committee's campaign treasurer shall file two reports.

(b) The first report must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not later than the 30th day before election day. The report covers the period beginning the day the committee's campaign treasurer appointment is filed or the first day after the period covered by the committee's last required report, as applicable, and continuing through the 40th day before election day.

(c) The second report must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not later than the eighth day before election day. The report covers the period beginning the 39th day before election day and continuing through the 10th day before election day.

(d) If a specific-purpose committee supports or opposes a candidate or measure in an election after a reporting period prescribed by Subsection (b) or (c), the first report must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not later than the regular deadline for the report covering the period during which the committee becomes involved in the election. The period covered by the first report begins the day the committee's campaign treasurer appointment is filed or the first day after the period covered by the committee's last required report, as applicable.

(e) In addition to other required reports, the campaign treasurer of a specific-purpose committee that supports or opposes a candidate in a runoff election shall file one report for the runoff election. The runoff election report must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not later than the eighth day before runoff election day. The report covers the period beginning the ninth day before the date of the main election and continuing through the 10th day before runoff election day.

(f) This section does not apply to a specific-purpose committee supporting only candidates who do not have opponents whose names are to appear on the ballot.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 2, § 7.17(a), eff. Aug. 28, 1989; Acts 2007, 80th Leg., ch. 673, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2007; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 553, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2009)

Sec. 254.125. Final Report of Committee for Supporting or Opposing Candidate or Measure.

(a) If a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a candidate or measure expects no reportable activity in

connection with the election to occur after the period covered by a report filed under this subchapter, the committee's campaign treasurer may designate the report as a "final" report.

(b) The designation of a report as a final report:

(1) relieves the campaign treasurer of the duty to file additional reports under this subchapter, except as provided by Subsection (c); and

(2) terminates the committee's campaign treasurer appointment.

(c) If, after a committee's final report is filed, reportable activity with respect to the election occurs, the committee must file the appropriate reports under this subchapter and is otherwise subject to the provisions of this title applicable to political committees. A report filed under this subsection may be designated as a final report.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.126. Dissolution Report of Committee for Assisting Officeholder.

(a) If a specific-purpose committee for assisting an officeholder expects no reportable activity to occur after the period covered by a report filed under this subchapter, the committee's campaign treasurer may designate the report as a "dissolution" report.

(b) The filing of a report designated as a dissolution report:

(1) relieves the campaign treasurer of the duty to file additional reports under this subchapter; and

(2) terminates the committee's campaign treasurer appointment.

(c) A dissolution report must contain an affidavit, executed by the committee's campaign treasurer, that states that all the committee's reportable activity has been reported.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.127. Termination Report.

(a) If the campaign treasurer appointment of a specific-purpose committee is terminated, the terminated campaign treasurer shall file a termination report.

(b) A termination report is not required if the termination occurs on the last day of a reporting period under this subchapter and a report for that period is filed as provided by this subchapter.

(c) The report covers the period beginning the day after the period covered by the last report required to be filed under this subchapter and continuing through the day the campaign treasurer appointment is terminated.

(d) The report shall be filed not later than the 10th day after the date the campaign treasurer appointment is terminated.

(e) Reportable activity contained in a termination report is not required to be included in any subsequent report of the committee that is filed under this subchapter. The period covered by the committee's first report filed under this subchapter after a termination report begins the day after the date the campaign treasurer appointment is terminated.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.128. Notice to Candidate and Officeholder of Contributions and Expenditures.

(a) If a specific-purpose committee accepts political contributions or makes political expenditures for a candidate or officeholder, the committee's campaign treasurer shall deliver written notice of that fact to the affected candidate or officeholder not later than the end of the period covered by the report in which the reportable activity occurs.

(b) The notice must include the full name and address of the political committee and its campaign treasurer and an indication that the committee is a specific-purpose committee.

(c) A campaign treasurer commits an offense if the campaign treasurer fails to comply with this section. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 246, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 254.129. Notice of Change in Committee Status.

(a) If a specific-purpose committee changes its operation and becomes a general-purpose committee, the committee's campaign treasurer shall deliver written notice of the change in status to the authority with whom the specific-purpose committee's reports under this chapter are required to be filed.

(b) The notice shall be delivered not later than the next deadline for filing a report under this subchapter that:

(1) occurs after the change in status; and

(2) would be applicable to the political committee if the committee had not changed its status.

(c) The notice must indicate the filing authority with whom future filings are expected to be made.

(d) A campaign treasurer commits an offense if the campaign treasurer fails to comply with this section. An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 247, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 254.130. Authority With Whom Reports Filed.

(a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), reports filed under this subchapter shall be filed with the authority with whom the political committee's campaign treasurer appointment is required to be filed.

(b) A specific-purpose committee created to support or oppose a measure on the issuance of bonds by a school district shall file reports under this subchapter with the commission.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 511, § 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 518, § 1, eff. June 19, 2009; Acts 2015, 84th Leg., ch. 707, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2015)

Subchapter F. Reporting by General Purpose Committee

Sec. 254.151. Additional Contents of Reports.

In addition to the contents required by Section 254.031, each report by a campaign treasurer of a general-purpose committee must include:

(1) the committee's full name and address;

(2) the full name, residence or business street address, and telephone number of the committee's campaign treasurer;

(3) the identity and date of the election for which the report is filed, if applicable;

(4) the name of each identified candidate or measure or classification by party of candidates supported or opposed by the committee, indicating whether the committee supports or opposes each listed candidate, measure, or classification by party of candidates;

(5) the name of each identified officeholder or classification by party of officeholders assisted by the committee;

(6) the principal occupation of each person from whom political contributions that in the aggregate exceed \$50 are accepted during the reporting period;

(7) the amount of each political expenditure in the form of a political contribution made to a candidate, officeholder, or another political committee that is returned to the committee during the reporting period, the name of the person to whom the expenditure was originally made, and the date it is returned;

(8) on a separate page or pages of the report, the identification of any contribution from a corporation or labor organization made and accepted under Subchapter D, Chapter 253 [V.T.C.A., Election Code § 253.091 et seq.]; and

(9) on a separate page or pages of the report, the identification of the name of the donor, the amount, and the date of any expenditure made by a corporation or labor organization to:

(A) establish or administer the political committee; or

(B) finance the solicitation of political contributions to the committee under Section 253.100.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.18, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.20, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Sec. 254.152. Time for Reporting Certain Expenditures.

If a general-purpose committee makes a political expenditure in the form of a political contribution to another general-purpose committee or to an out-of-state political committee and the contributing committee does not intend that the contribution be used in connection with a particular election, the contributing committee shall include the expenditure in the first report required to be filed under this subchapter after the expenditure is made.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.153. Semiannual Reporting Schedule for Committee.

(a) The campaign treasurer of a general-purpose committee shall file two reports for each year as provided by this section.

(b) The first report shall be filed not later than July 15. The report covers the period beginning January 1, the day the committee's campaign treasurer appointment is filed, or the first day after the period covered by the last report required to be filed under this subchapter, as applicable, and continuing through June 30.

(c) The second report shall be filed not later than January 15. The report covers the period beginning July 1, the day the committee's campaign treasurer appointment is filed, or the

first day after the period covered by the last report required to be filed under this subchapter, as applicable, and continuing through December 31.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.154. Additional Reports of Committee Involved in Election.

(a) In addition to other required reports, for each election in which a general-purpose committee is involved, the committee's campaign treasurer shall file two reports.

(b) The first report must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not later than the 30th day before election day. The report covers the period beginning the day the committee's campaign treasurer appointment is filed or the first day after the period covered by the committee's last required report, as applicable, and continuing through the 40th day before election day.

(c) The second report must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not later than the eighth day before election day. The report covers the period beginning the 39th day before election day and continuing through the 10th day before election day.

(d) If a general-purpose committee becomes involved in an election after a reporting period prescribed by Subsection (b) or (c), the first report must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not later than the regular deadline for the report covering the period during which the committee becomes involved in the election. The period covered by the first report begins the day the committee's campaign treasurer appointment is filed or the first day after the period covered by the committee's last required report, as applicable.

(e) In addition to other required reports, the campaign treasurer of a general-purpose committee involved in a runoff election shall file one report for the runoff election. The runoff election report must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not earlier than the 10th day or later than the eighth day before runoff election day. The report covers the period beginning the ninth day before the date of the main election and continuing through the 10th day before runoff election day.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2007, 80th Leg., ch. 673, § 3, eff. Sept. 1, 2007; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 553, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2009)

Sec. 254.1541. Alternate Reporting Requirements for Certain Committees.

(a) This section applies only to a general-purpose committee with less than \$20,000 in one or more accounts maintained by the committee in which political contributions are deposited, as of the last day of the preceding reporting period for which the committee was required to file a report.

(b) A report by a campaign treasurer of a general-purpose committee to which this section applies may include, instead of the information required under Sections 254.031(a)(1) and (5) and 254.151(6):

(1) the amount of political contributions from each person that in the aggregate exceed \$100 and that are accepted during

the reporting period by the committee, the full name and address of the person making the contributions, the person's principal occupation, and the dates of the contributions; and

(2) the total amount or a specific listing of the political contributions of \$100 or less accepted and the total amount or a specific listing of the political expenditures of \$100 or less made during the reporting period.

(Added by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 1081, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2005)

Sec. 254.155. Option to File Monthly; Notice.

(a) As an alternative to filing reports under Sections 254.153 and 254.154, a general-purpose committee may file monthly reports.

(b) To be entitled to file monthly reports, the committee must deliver written notice of the committee's intent to file monthly to the commission not earlier than January 1 or later than January 15 of the year in which the committee intends to file monthly. The notice for a committee formed after January 15 must be delivered at the time the committee's campaign treasurer appointment is filed.

(c) A committee that files monthly reports may revert to the regular filing schedule prescribed by Sections 254.153 and 254.154 by delivering written notice of the committee's intent not earlier than January 1 or later than January 15 of the year in which the committee intends to revert to the regular reporting schedule. The notice must include a report of all political contributions accepted and all political expenditures made that were not previously reported.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.18, eff. Aug. 30, 1993)

Sec. 254.156. Contents of Monthly Reports.

Each monthly report filed under this subchapter must comply with Sections 254.031 and 254.151 except that the maximum amount of a political contribution, expenditure, or loan that is not required to be individually reported is:

(1) \$10 in the aggregate; or

(2) \$20 in the aggregate for a contribution accepted by a general-purpose committee to which Section 254.1541 applies. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 1081, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2005)

Sec. 254.157. Monthly Reporting Schedule.

(a) The campaign treasurer of a general-purpose committee filing monthly reports shall file a report not later than the fifth day of the month following the period covered by the report. A report covering the month preceding an election in which the committee is involved must be received by the authority with whom the report is required to be filed not later than the fifth day of the month following the period covered by the report.

(b) A monthly report covers the period beginning the 26th day of each month and continuing through the 25th day of the following month, except that the period covered by the first report begins January 1 and continues through January 25.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 400, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 2007, 80th Leg., ch. 673, § 4, eff. Sept. 1, 2007)

Sec. 254.158. Exception to Monthly Reporting Schedule.

If the campaign treasurer appointment of a general-purpose committee filing monthly reports is filed after January 1 of the year in which monthly reports are filed, the period covered by the first monthly report begins the day the appointment is filed and continues through the 25th day of the month in which the appointment is filed unless the appointment is filed the 25th or a succeeding day of the month. In that case, the period continues through the 25th day of the month following the month in which the appointment is filed.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.1581. Reporting by Out-of-State Political Committee.

For each reporting period under this subchapter in which an out-of-state political committee accepts political contributions or makes political expenditures, the committee shall file with the commission a copy of one or more reports filed with the Federal Election Commission or with the proper filing authority of at least one other state that shows the political contributions accepted, political expenditures made, and other expenditures made by the committee. A report must be filed within the same period in which it is required to be filed under federal law or the law of the other state.

(Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.21, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Sec. 254.159. Dissolution Report.

If a general-purpose committee expects no reportable activity to occur after the period covered by a report filed under this subchapter, the report may be designated as a "dissolution" report as provided by Section 254.126 for a specific-purpose committee and has the same effect.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.160. Termination Report.

If the campaign treasurer appointment of a general-purpose committee is terminated, the campaign treasurer shall file a termination report as prescribed by Section 254.127 for a specific-purpose committee.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.161. Notice to Candidate and Officeholder of Contributions and Expenditures.

If a general-purpose committee other than the principal political committee of a political party or a political committee

established by a political party's county executive committee accepts political contributions or makes political expenditures for a candidate or officeholder, notice of that fact shall be given to the affected candidate or officeholder as provided by Section 254.128 for a specific-purpose committee.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 531, § 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1993)

Sec. 254.162. Notice of Change in Committee Status.

If a general-purpose committee changes its operation and becomes a specific-purpose committee, notice of the change in status shall be given to the commission as provided by Section 254.129 for a specific-purpose committee.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.19, eff. Aug. 30, 1993)

Sec. 254.163. Authority With Whom Reports Filed.

Reports filed under this subchapter shall be filed with the commission.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, § 3.20, eff. Aug. 30, 1993)

Sec. 254.164. Certain committees exempt from civil penalties.

The commission may not impose a civil penalty on a general-purpose committee for a violation of this chapter if the report filed by the committee that is the subject of the violation discloses that the committee did not accept political contributions totaling \$3,000 or more, accept political contributions from a single person totaling \$1,000 or more, or make or authorize political expenditures totaling \$3,000 or more during:

(1) the reporting period covered by the report that is the subject of the violation; or

(2) either of the two reporting periods preceding the reporting period described by Subdivision (1).

(Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., ch. 597, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2007)

*Subchapter G. Modified Reporting Procedures;
\$500 Maximum in Contributions or Expenditures*

Sec. 254.181. Modified Reporting Authorized.

(a) An opposed candidate or specific-purpose committee required to file reports under Subchapter C or E may file a report under this subchapter instead if the candidate or committee does not intend to accept political contributions that in the aggregate exceed \$500 or to make political expenditures that in the aggregate exceed \$500 in connection with the election.

(b) The amount of a filing fee paid by a candidate is excluded from the \$500 maximum expenditure permitted under this section.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.182. Declaration of Intent Required.

(a) To be entitled to file reports under this subchapter, an opposed candidate or specific-purpose committee must file with the campaign treasurer appointment a written declaration of intent not to exceed \$500 in political contributions or political expenditures in the election.

(b) The declaration of intent must contain a statement that the candidate or committee understands that if the \$500 maximum for contributions and expenditures is exceeded, the candidate or committee is required to file reports under Subchapter C or E, as applicable.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.183. Maximum Exceeded.

(a) An opposed candidate or specific-purpose committee that exceeds \$500 in political contributions or political expenditures in the election shall file reports as required by Subchapter C or E, as applicable.

(b) If a candidate or committee exceeds the \$500 maximum after the filing deadline prescribed by Subchapter C or E for the first report required to be filed under the appropriate subchapter, the candidate or committee shall file a report not later than 48 hours after the maximum is exceeded.

(c) A report filed under Subsection (b) covers the period beginning the day the campaign treasurer appointment is filed and continuing through the day the maximum is exceeded.

(d) The reporting period for the next report filed by the candidate or committee begins on the day after the last day of the period covered by the report filed under Subsection (b).

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.184. Applicability of Regular Reporting Requirements.

(a) Subchapter C or E, as applicable, applies to an opposed candidate or specific-purpose committee filing under this subchapter to the extent that the appropriate subchapter does not conflict with this subchapter.

(b) A candidate or committee filing under this subchapter is not required to file any reports of political contributions and political expenditures other than the semiannual reports required to be filed not later than July 15 and January 15.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Subchapter H. Unexpended Contributions

Sec. 254.201. Annual Report of Unexpended Contributions.

(a) This section applies to:

(1) a former officeholder who has unexpended political contributions after filing the last report required to be filed by Subchapter D; or

(2) a person who was an unsuccessful candidate who has unexpended political contributions after filing the last report required to be filed by Subchapter C.

(b) A person covered by this section shall file an annual report for each year in which the person retains unexpended contributions.
(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.202. Filing of Report; Contents.

(a) A person shall file the report required by Section 254.201 not earlier than January 1 or later than January 15 of each year following the year in which the person files a final report under this chapter.

(b) The report shall be filed with the authority with whom the person's campaign treasurer appointment was required to be filed.

(c) The report must include:

- (1) the person's full name and address;
- (2) the full name and address of each person to whom a payment from unexpended political contributions was made during the previous year;
- (3) the date, amount, and purpose of each payment made under Subdivision (2);
- (4) the total amount of unexpended political contributions as of December 31 of the previous year; and
- (5) the total amount of interest and other income earned on unexpended political contributions during the previous year.
(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.203. Retention of Contributions.

(a) A person may not retain political contributions covered by this title, assets purchased with the contributions, or interest and other income earned on the contributions for more than six years after the date the person either ceases to be an officeholder or candidate or files a final report under this chapter, whichever is later.

(b) If the person becomes an officeholder or candidate within the six-year period, the prohibition in Subsection (a) does not apply until the person again ceases to be an officeholder or candidate.

(c) A person who violates Subsection (a) commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.
(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 2, § 7.18, eff. Aug. 28, 1989)

Sec. 254.204. Disposition of Unexpended Contributions.

(a) At the end of the six-year period prescribed by Section 254.203, the former officeholder or candidate shall remit any unexpended political contributions to one or more of the following:

- (1) the political party with which the person was affiliated when the person's name last appeared on a ballot;
- (2) a candidate or political committee;
- (3) the comptroller for deposit in the state treasury;
- (4) one or more persons from whom political contributions were received, in accordance with Subsection (d);
- (5) a recognized charitable organization formed for educational, religious, or scientific purposes that is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and its subsequent amendments; or

(b) A public or private postsecondary educational institution or an institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003(8), Education Code, solely for the purpose of assisting or creating a scholarship program.

(b) A person who disposes of unexpended political contributions under Subsection (a)(2) shall report each contribution as if the person were a campaign treasurer of a specific-purpose committee.

(c) Political contributions disposed of under Subsection (a)(3) may be appropriated only for financing primary elections.

(d) The amount of political contributions disposed of under Subsection (a)(4) to one person may not exceed the aggregate amount accepted from that person during the last two years that the candidate or officeholder accepted contributions under this title.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 248, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.22, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Sec. 254.205. Report of Disposition of Unexpended Contributions.

(a) Not later than the 30th day after the date the six-year period prescribed by Section 254.203 ends, the person required to dispose of unexpended political contributions shall file a report of the disposition.

(b) The report shall be filed with the authority with whom the person's campaign treasurer appointment was required to be filed.

(c) The report must include:

- (1) the person's full name and address;
- (2) the full name and address of each person to whom a payment from unexpended political contributions is made; and
- (3) the date and amount of each payment reported under Subdivision (2).
(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Subchapter I. Civil Liability

Sec. 254.231. Liability to Candidates.

(a) A candidate or campaign treasurer or assistant campaign treasurer of a political committee who fails to report in whole or in part a campaign contribution or campaign expenditure as required by this chapter is liable for damages as provided by this section.

(b) Each opposing candidate whose name appears on the ballot is entitled to recover damages under this section.

(c) In this section, "damages" means:

- (1) twice the amount not reported that is required to be reported; and
- (2) reasonable attorney's fees incurred in the suit.

(d) Reasonable attorney's fees incurred in the suit may be awarded to the defendant if judgment is rendered in the defendant's favor.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 254.232. Liability to State.

A candidate, officeholder, or campaign treasurer or assistant campaign treasurer of a political committee who fails to report in whole or in part a political contribution or political expenditure as required by this chapter is liable in damages to the state in the amount of triple the amount not reported that is required to be reported.
(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

*Subchapter J. Reporting by Certain Persons
Making Direct Campaign Expenditures*

Sec. 254.261. Direct Campaign Expenditure Exceeding \$100.

(a) A person not acting in concert with another person who makes one or more direct campaign expenditures in an election from the person's own property shall comply with this chapter as if the person were the campaign treasurer of a general-purpose committee that does not file monthly reports under Section 254.155.

(b) A person is not required to file a report under this section if the person is required to disclose the expenditure in another report required under this title within the time applicable under this section for reporting the expenditure.

(c) This section does not require a general-purpose committee that files under the monthly reporting schedule to file reports under Section 254.154.

(d) A person is not required to file a campaign treasurer appointment for making expenditures for which reporting is required under this section, unless the person is otherwise required to file a campaign treasurer appointment under this title.

(Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., ch. 1009, § 5, eff. June 17, 2011)

Sec. 254.262. Travel Expense.

A direct campaign expenditure consisting of personal travel expenses incurred by a person may be made without complying with Section 254.261.

(Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., ch. 1009, § 5, eff. June 17, 2011)

**CHAPTER 255. REGULATING POLITICAL
ADVERTISING AND CAMPAIGN
COMMUNICATIONS**

Sec. 255.001. Required Disclosure on Political Advertising.

(a) A person may not knowingly cause to be published, distributed, or broadcast political advertising containing express advocacy that does not indicate in the advertising:

- (1) that it is political advertising; and
- (2) the full name of:
 - (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.

(b) Political advertising that is authorized by a candidate, an agent of a candidate, or a political committee filing reports under this title shall be deemed to contain express advocacy.

(c) A person may not knowingly use, cause or permit to be used, or continue to use any published, distributed, or broadcast political advertising containing express advocacy that the person knows does not include the disclosure required by Subsection (a). A person is presumed to know that the use of political advertising is prohibited by this subsection if the commission notifies the person in writing that the use is prohibited. A person who learns that political advertising signs, as defined by Section 259.001, that have been distributed do not include the disclosure required by Subsection (a) or include a disclosure that does not comply with Subsection (a) does not commit a continuing violation of this subsection if the person makes a good faith attempt to remove or correct those signs. A person who learns that printed political advertising other than a political advertising sign that has been distributed does not include the disclosure required by Subsection (a) or includes a disclosure that does not comply with Subsection (a) is not required to attempt to recover the political advertising and does not commit a continuing violation of this subsection as to any previously distributed political advertising.

(d) This section does not apply to:

- (1) tickets or invitations to political fund-raising events;
- (2) campaign buttons, pins, hats, or similar campaign materials; or
- (3) circulars or flyers that cost in the aggregate less than \$500 to publish and distribute.

(e) A person who violates this section is liable to the state for a civil penalty in an amount determined by the commission not to exceed \$4,000.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, § 2.23, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 824, § 5, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 255.002. Rates for Political Advertising.

(a) The rate charged for political advertising by a radio or television station may not exceed:

(1) during the 45 days preceding a general or runoff primary election and during the 60 days preceding a general or special election, the broadcaster's lowest unit charge for advertising of the same class, for the same time, and for the same period; or

(2) at any time other than that specified by Subdivision (1), the amount charged other users for comparable use of the station.

(b) The rate charged for political advertising that is printed or published may not exceed the lowest charge made for comparable use of the space for any other purposes.

(c) In determining amounts charged for comparable use, the amount and kind of space or time used, number of times used, frequency of use, type of advertising copy submitted, and any other relevant factors shall be considered.

(d) Discounts offered by a newspaper or magazine to its commercial advertisers shall be offered on equal terms to purchasers of political advertising from the newspaper or magazine.

(e) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly demands or receives or knowingly pays or offers to pay for political advertising more consideration than permitted by this section.

(f) An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987)

Sec. 255.003. Unlawful Use of Public Funds for Political Advertising.

(a) An officer or employee of a political subdivision may not knowingly spend or authorize the spending of public funds for political advertising.

(b) Subsection (a) does not apply to a communication that factually describes the purposes of a measure if the communication does not advocate passage or defeat of the measure.

(b-1) An officer or employee of a political subdivision may not spend or authorize the spending of public funds for a communication describing a measure if the communication contains information that:

- (1) the officer or employee knows is false; and
- (2) is sufficiently substantial and important as to be reasonably likely to influence a voter to vote for or against the measure.

(c) A person who violates Subsection (a) or (b-1) commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(d) It is an affirmative defense to prosecution for an offense under this section or the imposition of a civil penalty for conduct under this section that an officer or employee of a political subdivision reasonably relied on a court order or an interpretation of this section in a written opinion issued by:

- (1) a court of record;
- (2) the attorney general; or
- (3) the commission.

(e) On written request of the governing body of a political subdivision that has ordered an election on a measure, the commission shall prepare an advance written advisory opinion as to whether a particular communication relating to the measure does or does not comply with this section.

(f) Subsections (d) and (e) do not apply to a port authority or navigation district.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 644, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2009; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 843, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2009)

Editor's note—The amendments to Subsections (a), (d), (e), and (f) enacted by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 644, § 1, and Acts 2009, 81st Leg., ch. 843, § 1, are exactly the same.

Sec. 255.0031. Unlawful Use of Internal Mail System for Political Advertising.

(a) An officer or employee of a state agency or political subdivision may not knowingly use or authorize the use of an internal mail system for the distribution of political advertising.

(b) Subsection (a) does not apply to:

(1) the use of an internal mail system to distribute political advertising that is delivered to the premises of a state agency or political subdivision through the United States Postal Service; or

(2) the use of an internal mail system by a state agency or municipality to distribute political advertising that is the subject of or related to an investigation, hearing, or other official proceeding of the agency or municipality.

(c) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(d) In this section:

(1) "Internal mail system" means a system operated by a state agency or political subdivision to deliver written documents to officers or employees of the agency or subdivision.

(2) "State agency" means:

(A) a department, commission, board, office, or other agency that is in the legislative, executive, or judicial branch of state government;

(B) a university system or an institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code; or

(C) a river authority created under the constitution or a statute of this state.

(Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 229, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Sec. 255.004. True Source of Communication.

(a) A person commits an offense if, with intent to injure a candidate or influence the result of an election, the person enters into a contract or other agreement to print, publish, or broadcast political advertising that purports to emanate from a source other than its true source.

(b) A person commits an offense if, with intent to injure a candidate or influence the result of an election, the person knowingly represents in a campaign communication that the communication emanates from a source other than its true source.

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

(d) A person commits an offense if the person, with intent to injure a candidate or influence the result of an election:

(1) creates a deep fake video; and

(2) causes the deep fake video to be published or distributed within 30 days of an election.

(e) In this section, "deep fake video" means a video, created with the intent to deceive, that appears to depict a real person performing an action that did not occur in reality.

(Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 1339, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 255.005. Misrepresentation of Identity.

(a) A person commits an offense if, with intent to injure a candidate or influence the result of an election, the person misrepresents the person's identity or, if acting or purporting to act as an agent, misrepresents the identity of the agent's principal, in political advertising or a campaign communication.

(b) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 249, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 255.006. Misleading Use of Office Title.

(a) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly enters into a contract or other agreement to print, publish, or broadcast political advertising with the intent to represent to an ordinary and prudent person that a candidate holds a public office that the candidate does not hold at the time the agreement is made.

(b) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly represents in a campaign communication that a candidate holds a public office that the candidate does not hold at the time the representation is made.

(c) For purposes of this section, a person represents that a candidate holds a public office that the candidate does not hold if:

(1) the candidate does not hold the office that the candidate seeks; and

(2) the political advertising or campaign communication states the public office sought but does not include the word "for" in a type size that is at least one-half the type size used for the name of the office to clarify that the candidate does not hold that office.

(d) A person other than an officeholder commits an offense if the person knowingly uses a representation of the state seal in political advertising.

(e) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor. (Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 899, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 300, § 30, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Act; 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 250, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1134, § 9, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 62, § 5.17, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 737, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999)

Sec. 255.007. Renumbered to V.T.C.A., Election Code § 259.001 by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 824, § 2.**Sec. 255.008. Disclosure on Political Advertising for Judicial Office.**

(a) This section applies only to a candidate or political committee covered by Subchapter F, Chapter 253.

(b) Political advertising by a candidate who files a declaration of intent to comply with the limits on expenditures under Subchapter F, Chapter 253, or a specific-purpose committee for supporting such a candidate may include the following statement: "Political advertising paid for by (name of candidate or committee) in compliance with the voluntary limits of the Judicial Campaign Fairness Act."

(c) Political advertising by a candidate who files a declaration of intent to comply with the limits on expenditures under Subchapter F, Chapter 253, or a specific-purpose committee for supporting such a candidate that does not contain the statement prescribed by Subsection (b) must comply with Section 255.001.

(d) Political advertising by a candidate who files a declaration of intent to exceed the limits on expenditures under Subchapter F, Chapter 253, or a specific-purpose committee for supporting such a candidate must include the following state-

ment: "Political advertising paid for by (name of candidate or committee), (who or which) has rejected the voluntary limits of the Judicial Campaign Fairness Act."

(e) The commission shall adopt rules providing for:

(1) the minimum size of the disclosure required by this section in political advertising that appears on television or in writing; and

(2) the minimum duration of the disclosure required by this section in political advertising that appears on television or radio.

(f) A person who violates this section or a rule adopted under this section is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed:

(1) \$15,000, for a candidate for a statewide judicial office or a specific-purpose committee for supporting such a candidate;

(2) \$10,000, for a candidate for chief justice or justice, court of appeals, or a specific-purpose committee for supporting such a candidate; or

(3) \$5,000, for a candidate for any other judicial office covered by Subchapter F, Chapter 253, or a specific-purpose committee for supporting such a candidate.

(g) Section 253.176 applies to the imposition and disposition of a civil penalty under this section.

(Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 763, § 6, eff. Sept. 1, 1995)

CHAPTER 257. POLITICAL PARTIES**Sec. 257.001. Principal Political Committee of Political Party.**

The state or county executive committee of a political party may designate a general-purpose committee as the principal political committee for that party in the state or county, as applicable.

(Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.19, eff. Jan. 1, 1992)

Sec. 257.002. Requirements Relating to Corporate or Labor Union Contributions.

(a) A political party that accepts a contribution authorized by Section 253.104 may use the contribution only to:

(1) defray normal overhead and administrative or operating costs incurred by the party; or

(2) administer a primary election or convention held by the party.

(b) A political party that accepts contributions authorized by Section 253.104 shall maintain the contributions in a separate account.

(Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.19, eff. Jan. 1, 1992)

Sec. 257.003. Report Required.

(a) A political party that accepts contributions authorized by Section 253.104 shall report all contributions and expenditures made to and from the account required by Section 257.002.

(b) The report must be filed with the commission and must include the information required under Section 254.031 as if the contributions or expenditures were political contributions or political expenditures.

(c) Sections 254.001, 254.032 and 254.037 apply to a report required by this section as if the party chair were a campaign treasurer of a political committee and as if the contributions or expenditures were political contributions or political expenditures.

(d) The commission shall prescribe by rule reporting schedules for each primary election held by the political party and for the general election for state and county officers.

(Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.19, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 251, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 257.004. Restrictions on Contributions Before General Election.

(a) Beginning on the 60th day before the date of the general election for state and county officers and continuing through the day of the election, a political party may not knowingly accept a contribution authorized by Section 253.104 or make an expenditure from the account required by Section 257.002.

(b) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree. (Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.19, eff. Jan. 1, 1992)

Sec. 257.005. Candidate for State or County Chair of Political Party.

(a) Except as provided by this section, the following are subject to the requirements of this title that apply to a candidate for public office:

(1) a candidate for state chair of a political party with a nominee on the ballot in the most recent gubernatorial general election; and

(2) a candidate for election to the office of county chair of a political party with a nominee on the ballot in the most recent gubernatorial general election if the county has a population of 350,000 or more.

(b) A political committee that supports or opposes a candidate covered by Subsection (a) is subject to the provisions of this title that apply to any other committee that supports or opposes candidates for public office, except as provided by this section.

(c) The reporting schedules for a candidate covered by Subsection (a) or a political committee supporting or opposing the candidate shall be prescribed by commission rule.

(d) Except as provided by this section, each contribution to and expenditure by a candidate covered by Subsection (a) is subject to the same requirements of this title as a political contribution to or a political expenditure by a candidate for public office. Each contribution to and expenditure by a political committee supporting or opposing a candidate covered by Subsection (a) is subject to the same requirements of this title as a political contribution to or political expenditure by any other specific-purpose committee.

(e) Section 251.001(1) does not apply to this section. (Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.19, eff. Jan. 1, 1992; Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, § 252, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 249, §§ 2.24, 2.25, eff. Sept. 1, 2003)

Sec. 257.006. Criminal Penalty for Failure to Comply.

(a) Except as provided by Section 257.004, a person who knowingly uses a contribution in violation of Section 257.002 or who knowingly fails to otherwise comply with this chapter commits an offense.

(b) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor. (Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.19, eff. Jan. 1, 1992)

Sec. 257.007. Rules.

The commission shall adopt rules to implement this chapter. (Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 304, § 5.19, eff. Jan. 1, 1992)

CHAPTER 258. FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

Sec. 258.001. Short Title.

This chapter may be cited as the Fair Campaign Practices Act.

(Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 168, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 258.002. Purpose.

(a) The purpose of this chapter is to encourage every candidate and political committee to subscribe to the Code of Fair Campaign Practices.

(b) It is the intent of the legislature that every candidate and political committee that subscribes to the Code of Fair Campaign Practices will follow the basic principles of decency, honesty, and fair play to encourage healthy competition and open discussion of issues and candidate qualifications and to discourage practices that cloud the issues or unfairly attack opponents.

(Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 168, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 258.003. Delivery of Copy of Code.

(a) When a candidate or political committee files its campaign treasurer appointment, the authority with whom the appointment is filed shall give the candidate or political committee a blank form of the Code of Fair Campaign Practices and a copy of this chapter.

(b) The authority shall inform each candidate or political committee that the candidate or committee may subscribe to and file the code with the authority and that subscription to the code is voluntary.

(Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 168, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 258.004. Text of Code.

The Code of Fair Campaign Practices reads as follows:

CODE OF FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

There are basic principles of decency, honesty, and fair play that every candidate and political committee in this state has a moral obligation to observe and uphold, in order that, after vigorously contested but fairly conducted campaigns, our citizens may exercise their constitutional rights to a free and untrammelled choice and the will of the people may be fully and clearly expressed on the issues.

THEREFORE:

(1) I will conduct the campaign openly and publicly and limit attacks on my opponent to legitimate challenges to my opponent's record and stated positions on issues.

(2) I will not use or permit the use of character defamation, whispering campaigns, libel, slander, or scurrilous attacks on any candidate or the candidate's personal or family life.

(3) I will not use or permit any appeal to negative prejudice based on race, sex, religion, or national origin.

(4) I will not use campaign material of any sort that misrepresents, distorts, or otherwise falsifies the facts, nor will I use malicious or unfounded accusations that aim at creating or exploiting doubts, without justification, as to the personal integrity or patriotism of my opponent.

(5) I will not undertake or condone any dishonest or unethical practice that tends to corrupt or undermine our system of free elections or that hampers or prevents the full and free expression of the will of the voters, including any activity aimed at intimidating voters or discouraging them from voting.

(6) I will defend and uphold the right of every qualified voter to full and equal participation in the electoral process, and will not engage in any activity aimed at intimidating voters or discouraging them from voting.

(7) I will immediately and publicly repudiate methods and tactics that may come from others that I have pledged not to use or condone. I shall take firm action against any subordinate who violates any provision of this code or the laws governing elections.

I, the undersigned, candidate for election to public office in the State of Texas or campaign treasurer of a political committee, hereby voluntarily endorse, subscribe to, and solemnly pledge myself to conduct the campaign in accordance with the above principles and practices.

Date: _____

Signature _____

(Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 168, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 258.005. Forms.

The commission shall print copies of the Code of Fair Campaign Practices and shall supply the forms to the authorities with whom copies of the code may be filed in quantities and at times requested by the authorities.

(Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 168, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 258.006. Acceptance and Preservation of Copies.

(a) An authority with whom a campaign treasurer appointment is filed shall accept each completed copy of the code submitted to the authority that is properly subscribed to by a candidate or the campaign treasurer of a political committee.

(b) Each copy of the code accepted under this section shall be preserved by the authority with whom it is filed for the period prescribed for the filer's campaign treasurer appointment.

(Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 168, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 258.007. Subscription to Code Voluntary.

The subscription to the Code of Fair Campaign Practices by a candidate or a political committee is voluntary.

(Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 168, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 258.008. Indication on Political Advertising.

A candidate or a political committee that has filed a copy of the Code of Fair Campaign Practices may so indicate on political advertising in a form to be determined by the commission.

(Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 168, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

Sec. 258.009. Civil Cause of Action.

This chapter does not create a civil cause of action for recovery of damages or for enforcement of this chapter.

(Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 168, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997)

CHAPTER 259. POLITICAL SIGNS

Sec. 259.001. Notice Requirement on Political Advertising Signs.

(a) The following notice must be written on each political advertising sign:

"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."

(b) A person commits an offense if the person:

(1) knowingly enters into a contract to print or make a political advertising sign that does not contain the notice required by Subsection (a); or

(2) instructs another person to place a political advertising sign that does not contain the notice required by Subsection (a).

(c) An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor.

(d) It is an exception to the application of Subsection (b) that the political advertising sign was printed or made before September 1, 1997, and complied with Subsection (a) as it existed immediately before that date.

(e) In this section, "political advertising sign" means a written form of political advertising designed to be seen from a road but does not include a bumper sticker.
(Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 288, § 5, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1134, § 10, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1349, § 71, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Renumbered from V.T.C.A., Election Code § 255.007 and amended by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 824, § 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 259.002. Regulation of Display of Political Signs by Property Owner's Association.

(a) In this section, "property owners' association" has the meaning assigned by Section 202.001, Property Code.

(b) Except as otherwise provided by this section, a property owners' association may not enforce or adopt a restrictive covenant that prohibits a property owner from displaying on the owner's property one or more signs advertising a candidate or measure for an election:

- (1) on or after the 90th day before the date of the election to which the sign relates; or
- (2) before the 10th day after that election date.

(c) This section does not prohibit the enforcement or adoption of a covenant that:

- (1) requires a sign to be ground-mounted; or
- (2) limits a property owner to displaying only one sign for each candidate or measure.

(d) This section does not prohibit the enforcement or adoption of a covenant that prohibits a sign that:

- (1) contains roofing material, siding, paving materials, flora, one or more balloons or lights, or any other similar building, landscaping, or nonstandard decorative component;
- (2) is attached in any way to plant material, a traffic control device, a light, a trailer, a vehicle, or any other existing structure or object;
- (3) includes the painting of architectural surfaces;
- (4) threatens the public health or safety;
- (5) is larger than four feet by six feet;
- (6) violates a law;
- (7) contains language, graphics, or any display that would be offensive to the ordinary person; or
- (8) is accompanied by music or other sounds or by streamers or is otherwise distracting to motorists.

(e) A property owners' association may remove a sign displayed in violation of a restrictive covenant permitted by this section.

(Added by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 1010, § 1, eff. June 18, 2005; Renumbered from V.T.C.A., Property Code § 202.009 and amended by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 824, § 3, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)

Sec. 259.003. Regulation of Political Signs by Municipality.

(a) In this section, "private real property" does not include real property subject to an easement or other encumbrance that allows a municipality to use the property for a public purpose.

(b) A municipal charter provision or ordinance that regulates signs may not, for a sign that contains primarily a political message and that is located on private real property with the consent of the property owner:

- (1) prohibit the sign from being placed;
- (2) require a permit or approval of the municipality or impose a fee for the sign to be placed;
- (3) restrict the size of the sign; or
- (4) provide for a charge for the removal of a political sign that is greater than the charge for removal of other signs regulated by ordinance.

(c) Subsection (b) does not apply to a sign, including a billboard, that contains primarily a political message on a temporary basis and that is generally available for rent or purchase to carry commercial advertising or other messages that are not primarily political.

- (d) Subsection (b) does not apply to a sign that:
 - (1) has an effective area greater than 36 feet;
 - (2) is more than eight feet high;
 - (3) is illuminated; or
 - (4) has any moving elements.

(Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1004, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Renumbered from V.T.C.A., Local Government Code § 216.903 and amended by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., ch. 824, § 4, eff. Sept. 1, 2019)