

ARKANSAS REGISTER

Proposed Rule Cover Sheet



Secretary of State
John Thurston
500 Woodlane Street, Suite 026
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-1094
(501) 682-5070
www.sos.arkansas.gov



Name of Department _____

Agency or Division Name _____

Other Subdivision or Department, If Applicable _____

Previous Agency Name, If Applicable _____

Contact Person _____

Contact E-mail _____

Contact Phone _____

Name of Rule _____

Newspaper Name _____

Date of Publishing _____

Final Date for Public Comment _____

Location and Time of Public Meeting _____

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FILING PROPOSED RULES WITH
THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

DEPARTMENT _____
 BOARD/COMMISSION _____
 BOARD/COMMISSION DIRECTOR _____
 CONTACT PERSON _____
 ADDRESS _____
 PHONE NO. _____ EMAIL _____
 NAME OF PRESENTER(S) AT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING _____
 PRESENTER EMAIL(S) _____

INSTRUCTIONS

In order to file a proposed rule for legislative review and approval, please submit this Legislative Questionnaire and Financial Impact Statement, and attach (1) a summary of the rule, describing what the rule does, the rule changes being proposed, and the reason for those changes; (2) both a markup and clean copy of the rule; and (3) all documents required by the Questionnaire.

If the rule is being filed for permanent promulgation, please email these items to the attention of Rebecca Miller-Rice, miller-ricer@blr.arkansas.gov, for submission to the Administrative Rules Subcommittee.

If the rule is being filed for emergency promulgation, please email these items to the attention of Director Marty Garrity, garritym@blr.arkansas.gov, for submission to the Executive Subcommittee.

Please answer each question completely using layman terms.

1. What is the official title of this rule?

2. What is the subject of the proposed rule? [These rules concern the registration and reporting requirements for ballot and legislative question committees.](#)

3. Is this rule being filed under the emergency provisions of the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act? Yes No

If yes, please attach the statement required by Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(c)(1).

If yes, will this emergency rule be promulgated under the permanent provisions of the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act? Yes No

4. Is this rule being filed for permanent promulgation? Yes No

If yes, was this rule previously reviewed and approved under the emergency provisions of the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act? Yes No

If yes, what was the effective date of the emergency rule? _____

On what date does the emergency rule expire? _____

5. Is this rule required to comply with a *federal* statute, rule, or regulation? Yes No

If yes, please provide the federal statute, rule, and/or regulation citation.

6. Is this rule required to comply with a *state* statute or rule? Yes No

If yes, please provide the state statute and/or rule citation.

7. Are two (2) rules being repealed in accord with Executive Order 23-02? Yes No

If yes, please list the rules being repealed.

If no, please explain.

It is the position of the Commission that this proposed amendment would not create a new rule, so much as keep existing rules up-to-date and in conformity with the law. If this is considered a new rule, then the Commission respectfully requests the exemption be granted. Moreover, the Commission seeks to repeal the "Rules on Display of Campaign Literature on Vehicles..."

8. Is this a new rule? Yes No

Does this repeal an existing rule? Yes No

If yes, the proposed repeal should be designated by strikethrough. If it is being replaced with a new rule, please attach both the proposed rule to be repealed and the replacement rule.

Is this an amendment to an existing rule? Yes No

If yes, all changes should be indicated by strikethrough and underline. In addition, please be sure to label the markup copy clearly as the markup.

9. What is the state law that grants the agency its rulemaking authority for the proposed rule, outside of the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act? Please provide the specific Arkansas Code citation(s), including subsection(s).

10. Is the proposed rule the result of any recent legislation by the Arkansas General Assembly?
Yes No

If yes, please provide the year of the act(s) and act number(s).

11. What is the reason for this proposed rule? Why is it necessary?

12. Please provide the web address by which the proposed rule can be accessed by the public as provided in Ark. Code Ann. § 25-19-108(b)(1).

13. Will a public hearing be held on this proposed rule? Yes No

If yes, please complete the following:

Date: TBD

Time: _____

Place: _____

Please be sure to advise Bureau Staff if this information changes for any reason.

14. On what date does the public comment period expire for the permanent promulgation of the rule? Please provide the specific date. TBD

15. What is the proposed effective date for this rule? _____

16. Please attach (1) a copy of the notice required under Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(a)(1) and (2) proof of the publication of that notice.

17. Please attach proof of filing the rule with the Secretary of State, as required by Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e)(1)(A).

18. Please give the names of persons, groups, or organizations that you anticipate will comment on these rules. Please also provide their position (for or against), if known.

19. Is the rule expected to be controversial? Yes No

If yes, please explain.

FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS COMPLETELY.

DEPARTMENT _____
BOARD/COMMISSION _____
PERSON COMPLETING THIS STATEMENT _____
TELEPHONE NO. _____ **EMAIL** _____

To comply with Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e), please complete the Financial Impact Statement and email it with the questionnaire, summary, markup and clean copy of the rule, and other documents. Please attach additional pages, if necessary.

TITLE OF THIS RULE _____

1. Does this proposed, amended, or repealed rule have a financial impact?
Yes No

2. Is the rule based on the best reasonably obtainable scientific, technical, economic, or other evidence and information available concerning the need for, consequences of, and alternatives to the rule?
Yes No

3. In consideration of the alternatives to this rule, was this rule determined by the agency to be the least costly rule considered? Yes No

If no, please explain:

(a) how the additional benefits of the more costly rule justify its additional cost;

(b) the reason for adoption of the more costly rule;

(c) whether the reason for adoption of the more costly rule is based on the interests of public health, safety, or welfare, and if so, how; and

(d) whether the reason for adoption of the more costly rule is within the scope of the agency's statutory authority, and if so, how.

4. If the purpose of this rule is to implement a *federal* rule or regulation, please state the following:
 - (a) What is the cost to implement the federal rule or regulation?

Current Fiscal Year

General Revenue _____
Federal Funds _____
Cash Funds _____
Special Revenue _____
Other (Identify) _____

Total _____

Next Fiscal Year

General Revenue _____
Federal Funds _____
Cash Funds _____
Special Revenue _____
Other (Identify) _____

Total _____

(b) What is the additional cost of the state rule?

Current Fiscal Year

General Revenue _____
Federal Funds _____
Cash Funds _____
Special Revenue _____
Other (Identify) _____

Total _____

Next Fiscal Year

General Revenue _____
Federal Funds _____
Cash Funds _____
Special Revenue _____
Other (Identify) _____

Total _____

5. What is the total estimated cost by fiscal year to any private individual, private entity, or private business subject to the proposed, amended, or repealed rule? Please identify those subject to the rule, and explain how they are affected.

Current Fiscal Year

\$ _____

Next Fiscal Year

\$ _____

6. What is the total estimated cost by fiscal year to a state, county, or municipal government to implement this rule? Is this the cost of the program or grant? Please explain how the government is affected.

Current Fiscal Year

\$ _____

Next Fiscal Year

\$ _____

7. With respect to the agency's answers to Questions #5 and #6 above, is there a new or increased cost or obligation of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) per year to a private individual, private entity, private business, state government, county government, municipal government, or to two (2) or more of those entities combined?

Yes No

If yes, the agency is required by Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e)(4) to file written findings at the time of filing the financial impact statement. The written findings shall be filed simultaneously with the financial impact statement and shall include, without limitation, the following:

- (1) a statement of the rule's basis and purpose;
- (2) the problem the agency seeks to address with the proposed rule, including a statement of whether a rule is required by statute;
- (3) a description of the factual evidence that:
 - (a) justifies the agency's need for the proposed rule; and
 - (b) describes how the benefits of the rule meet the relevant statutory objectives and justify the rule's costs;
- (4) a list of less costly alternatives to the proposed rule and the reasons why the alternatives do not adequately address the problem to be solved by the proposed rule;
- (5) a list of alternatives to the proposed rule that were suggested as a result of public comment and the reasons why the alternatives do not adequately address the problem to be solved by the proposed rule;
- (6) a statement of whether existing rules have created or contributed to the problem the agency seeks to address with the proposed rule and, if existing rules have created or contributed to the problem, an explanation of why amendment or repeal of the rule creating or contributing to the problem is not a sufficient response; and
- (7) an agency plan for review of the rule no less than every ten (10) years to determine whether, based upon the evidence, there remains a need for the rule including, without limitation, whether:
 - (a) the rule is achieving the statutory objectives;
 - (b) the benefits of the rule continue to justify its costs; and
 - (c) the rule can be amended or repealed to reduce costs while continuing to achieve the statutory objectives.

NOTICE OF RULE MAKING AND PUBLIC HEARING ARKANSAS ETHICS COMMISSION

NOTICE is hereby given that the Arkansas Ethics Commission intends to amend its existing Rules on Ballot and Legislative Question Committees, Rules on Campaign Finance & Disclosure, Rules on Conflicts, Rules on Display of Campaign Literature on Vehicle of Candidate or Public Official While on State Capitol Grounds (seeking to repeal), Rules on Independent Expenditures, Rules on Local-Option Ballot Question Committees, Rules on Political Committees, and Rules of Practice & Procedure. The proposed amendments to the rules are intended to implement and administer the provisions of Acts 85, 307, 455, 456, 552, 753, and 883 of the 2023 Regular Session of the 94th General Assembly, and to further implement and administer applicable provisions of the laws under the Commission's jurisdiction. Copies of the proposed amended rules may be obtained from the Commission, which is located at 501 Woodlane, Suite 301N, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72201, telephone (501) 324-9600, and may also be found at www.ArkansasEthics.com.

Interested parties should forward written comments to Graham F. Sloan, Director, Post Office Box 1917, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1917, by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 20, 2023. The Commission will hold a public hearing on Friday, September 22, 2023, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Commission's office in Little Rock to consider the written submissions and receive oral comments on the aforementioned sets of rules.

CLEAN

ARKANSAS ETHICS COMMISSION

RULES ON BALLOT AND LEGISLATIVE QUESTION COMMITTEES

**ARKANSAS ETHICS COMMISSION
Post Office Box 1917
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1917
(501) 324-9600 or (800) 422-7773
Facsimile (501) 324-9606**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

§ 600 DEFINITIONS 1

§ 601 CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES – LIMITS 5

§ 602 CONTRIBUTIONS – DATE RECEIVED..... 5

§ 603 IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS – REPORTING AND VALUE..... 5

§ 604 VOLUNTEER SERVICES – EXCEPTION TO IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION 6

§ 605 EXPENDITURES – DATE MADE 6

§ 606 STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION 7

§ 607 FILING OF FINANCIAL REPORTS 8

§ 608 CONTENTS OF FINANCIAL REPORTS 9

§ 609 VERIFICATION OF FINANCIAL REPORTS..... 11

§ 610 TIME TO FILE FINANCIAL REPORTS – LATE FEE 11

§ 611 DISSOLUTION AND DISPOSITION OF FUNDS..... 11

§ 612 INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND RETENTION OF RECORDS 12

§ 613 PROHIBITION AGAINST PUBLIC SERVANTS
CIRCULATING AN INITIATIVE OR REFERENDUM PETITION 12

§ 614 PROHIBITION AGAINST USE OF PUBLIC OFFICE/ROOM OR
PERSONAL PROPERTY PROVIDED WITH PUBLIC FUNDS 12

§ 615 SCOPE..... 12

§ 600 DEFINITIONS

(a) Approved Political Action Committee – As used in these rules, the term “approved political action committee” means any person who:

- (i) Receives contributions from one (1) or more persons in order to make contributions to candidates, campaign committees, ballot question committees, legislative question committees, political parties, county political party committees, or other political action committees;
- (ii) Does not accept any contribution or cumulative contributions in excess of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) from any person in any calendar year; and
- (iii) Registers pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 7-6-215 prior to making contributions.

An approved political action committee shall not include an organized political party as defined in Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-101, a county political party committee, the candidate's own campaign committee, an exploratory committee, or a ballot question committee or legislative question committee.

(b) Ballot Question – As used in these rules, the term “ballot question” means a question in the form of a statewide, county, municipal, or school district initiative or referendum which is submitted or intended to be submitted to a popular vote at an election, whether or not it qualifies for the ballot.

(c)(1) Ballot Question Committee – As used in these rules, the term “ballot question committee” means any person, located within or outside Arkansas, that receives contributions for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of any ballot question, or any person, other than an elected official expending public funds,¹ or an individual, located within or

¹ Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-111 was established by Act 312 of 2013 and falls outside of the Arkansas Ethics Commission’s jurisdiction. Pursuant thereto, an “elected official” or “a person appointed to an elective office” is permitted to expend or permit the expenditure of public funds to support or oppose a ballot measure. However, Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-111(b) provides that “[i]t is unlawful for a public servant or a governmental body to expend or permit the expenditure of public funds to support or oppose a ballot measure.” With regard to this prohibition, it is noted that the term “public funds” is defined to mean “funds, moneys, receivables, grants, investments, instruments, real or personal property, or other assets, liabilities, equities, revenues, receipts, or disbursements belonging to, held by, or passed through a governmental body[.]” In addition, the term “public servant” is defined to mean “an individual who is (i) Employed by a governmental body; (ii) Appointed to serve a governmental body; or (iii) Appointed to a governmental body.” That definition goes on to state that “‘Public servant’ does not include: (i) An elected official; or (ii) A person appointed to an elective office.” It is noted that Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-111 does not: limit the freedom of speech of a public servant or governmental body, including without limitation verbal expressions of views supporting or opposing a ballot measure; prohibit a governmental body from expressing an opinion on a ballot measure through the passage of a resolution or proclamation; prohibit the incidental use of state resources by a public servant, including without limitation travel costs, when speaking at an event in which a ballot measure is discussed if the subject matter of the

outside Arkansas, who makes expenditures for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of any ballot question.

(2) A person other than an individual or an approved political action committee as defined in § 600(a) of these rules, located within or outside Arkansas, also qualifies as a ballot question committee if two percent (2%) or more of its annual revenues, operating expenses, or funds are used to make a contribution or contributions to another ballot question committee and if the contribution or contributions exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) in value.

(d)(1) **Contribution** – As used in these rules, the term “contribution” means, whether direct or indirect, advances, deposits, transfers of funds, contracts, or obligations, whether or not legally enforceable, payments, gifts, subscriptions, assessments, payment for services, dues, advancements, forbearance, loans, pledges or promises of money or anything of value, whether or not legally enforceable, to a person receiving same for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question.

(2) “Contribution” includes the purchase of tickets for events, such as dinners, luncheons, rallies, and similar fundraising events, and the granting of discounts or rebates by television and radio stations and newspapers, not extended on an equal basis to all persons seeking to expressly advocate the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question.

(3) “Contribution” shall not include noncompensated, nonreimbursed volunteer personal services or travel.

(e) **Contribution and Expenditure** – As used in these rules, “contribution and expenditure” shall not include activities designed solely to encourage individuals to register to vote or to vote, or any communication by a bona fide church or religious denomination to its own members or adherents for the sole purpose of protecting the right to practice the religious tenets of the church or religious denomination, and “expenditure” shall not include one made for communication by a person strictly with the person’s paid members or shareholders.

(f) **Disqualification of a Ballot Question** – As used in these rules, “disqualification of a ballot question” means any action or process, legal or otherwise, which seeks to prevent a ballot question from being on the ballot at an election.

speaking engagement is within the scope of the official duties and responsibilities of the public servant; or prohibit the dissemination of public information at a speaking engagement and the incidental use of state resources in the analysis and preparation of that public information if the subject matter of the public information is within the scope of the official duties and responsibilities of the public servant. Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-111 provides that a violation of the prohibition contained therein is a Class A misdemeanor, with the exception that a public servant who is found guilty or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to such a violation is ineligible to hold any office, employment, or appointment in a governmental body and that if a public servant is found guilty or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to such a violation while employed by a governmental body, he or she shall be removed from employment immediately.

(g) Elected Official – As used in these rules, “elected official” means any person holding an elective office of any governmental body, whether elected or appointed to the office.

(h) Expenditure – As used in these rules, the term “expenditure” means a purchase, payment, distribution, gift, loan, or advance of money or anything of value, and a contract, promise, or agreement to make an expenditure, for goods, services, materials, or facilities for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question.

(i) Governmental Body – As used in these rules, the term “governmental body” means any office, department, commission, council, board, committee, legislative body, agency, or other establishment of the executive, judicial, or legislative branch of the state, municipality, county, school district, improvement district, or any political district or subdivision thereof.

(j) In-kind Contribution – As used in these rules, the term “in-kind contribution” means a contribution of goods, services, or any other thing of value, or its use, other than money and includes an agreement made or other obligation incurred, whether legally enforceable or not, to make such a contribution in the future. A person makes an “in-kind contribution” whenever, in conjunction with the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question, such person purchases, sells or leases an item, or provides a service to or on behalf of a ballot or legislative question committee without charge or for a charge which is less than the fair market value of the item or service provided. The difference between the fair market value and the charge shall be the value of the in-kind contribution.

(k) Legislative Question – As used in these rules, the term “legislative question” means a question in the form of a measure referred by the General Assembly, a quorum court, a municipality, or a school district to a popular vote at an election.

(l)(1) Legislative Question Committee – As used in these rules, the term “legislative question committee” means any person, located within or outside Arkansas, that receives contributions for the purpose of expressly advocating the passage or defeat of any legislative question or any person, other than an elected official expending public funds,² or an individual, located within or outside Arkansas, who makes expenditures for the purpose of expressly advocating the passage or defeat of any legislative question.

(2) A person other than an individual or an approved political action committee as defined in § 600(a) of these rules, located within or outside Arkansas, also qualifies as a legislative question committee if two percent (2%) or more of its annual revenues, operating expenses, or funds are used to make a contribution or contributions to another legislative question committee and if the contribution or contributions exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) in value.

² See Footnote 1.

(m) Person – As used in these rules, the term “person” means any individual, business, proprietorship, firm, partnership, joint venture, syndicate, business trust, labor organization, company, corporation, association, committee, or any other organization or group of persons acting in concert. “Person” includes an elected official using public funds to expressly advocate the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of any ballot question or the passage or defeat of any legislative question.

(n) Political Party – As used in these rules, the term “political party” means any group of voters which, at the last preceding general election, polled for its candidate for Governor in the state or nominees for presidential electors at least three percent (3%) of the entire vote cast for the office, or which has filed a petition with the Secretary of State containing at the time of filing the signatures of at least ten thousand (10,000) registered voters in the State of Arkansas, declaring the intention of organizing a political party, the name of which shall be stated in the declaration, and of participating in the next general election, and which has been declared a new political party by the Secretary of State. When any political party fails to obtain three percent (3%) of the total votes cast at an election for the office of Governor or nominees for presidential electors, it shall cease to be a political party.

(o) Prohibited Political Action Committee – As used in these rules, the term “prohibited political action committee” means any person who receives contributions from one (1) or more persons in order to make contributions to candidates, ballot question committees, legislative question committees, political parties, county political party committees, or other political action committees but who does not meet the requirements of an approved political action committee. A prohibited political action committee shall not include a political party as defined in Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-101 or a political party that meets the requirements of Ark. Code Ann. § 7-7-205, the candidate's own campaign committee, a county political party committee, an exploratory committee, or a ballot or legislative question committee.

(p) Public Appointee – As used in these rules, the term “public appointee” means an individual who is appointed to a governmental body. It does not include an individual appointed to an elective office.

(q) Public Employee – As used in these rules, the term “public employee” means an individual who is employed by a governmental body or who is appointed to serve a governmental body. It does not include public officials or public appointees.

(r) Public Official – As used in these rules, the term “public official” means a legislator or any other person holding an elective office of any governmental body, whether elected or appointed to the office, and shall include such persons during the time period between the date they were elected and the date they took office. “Public official” includes without limitation a member of a school district board of directors.

(s) Public Servant – As used in these rules, the term “public servant” means all public officials, public employees, and public appointees.

(t) **Qualification of a Ballot Question** – As used in these rules, “qualification of a ballot question” means any action or process, legal or otherwise, through which a ballot question obtains certification to be on the ballot at an election.

§ 601 CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES – LIMITS

(a) No ballot question committee or legislative question committee shall accept any contribution in cash, meaning currency or coin, which exceeds one hundred dollars (\$100).

(b) No ballot question committee or legislative question committee shall accept any contribution from a prohibited political action committee as defined in § 600(o). It shall be unlawful for a prohibited political action committee as defined in § 600(o) to make a contribution to a ballot question committee or a legislative question committee.

(c) No ballot question committee, legislative question committee, or individual shall make an expenditure in cash which exceeds fifty dollars (\$50.00) in conjunction with expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question.

(d) No contributions shall be made, directly or indirectly, by any person in a name other than the name by which the person is identified for legal purposes.

(e)(1) No person shall make an anonymous contribution totaling fifty dollars (\$50.00) or more to a ballot question committee or legislative question committee.

(2) Any such anonymous contribution actually received by any ballot question committee or legislative question committee shall be promptly paid by the recipient to the Arkansas Ethics Commission for deposit in the State Treasury as general revenues.

§ 602 CONTRIBUTIONS – DATE RECEIVED

A contribution to a ballot or legislative question committee shall be deemed to have been “received” or “accepted” when it has been delivered to a committee and not returned to the contributor within five (5) business days.

§ 603 IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS – REPORTING AND VALUE

(a) In addition to monetary contributions, committees are required to report the receipt of any “in-kind contributions,” as defined in § 600(j) of these rules.

(b) For reporting purposes, the value of an in-kind contribution shall be its fair market value if it had been purchased, sold or leased in the ordinary course of business. An in-kind contribution constitutes a contribution. Those transactions which are specifically excluded from the definition of “contribution” are likewise excluded from the definition of “in-kind contribution.”

(c) A person making an in-kind contribution shall place the value on such contribution when given. The committee may question the value set by the donor if it appears unreasonable and shall revalue the in-kind contribution to a reasonable value. The value of an in-kind contribution is a factual determination which shall be made by the Arkansas Ethics Commission.

(d) The costs associated with any news story, commentary or editorial distributed in the ordinary course of business by a broadcasting station, newspaper or other periodical publication do not constitute an in-kind contribution.

§ 604 VOLUNTEER SERVICES – EXCEPTION TO IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION

(a) In addition to the other exceptions noted in these rules, the value of volunteer services provided without compensation do not constitute an in-kind contribution. Accordingly, an individual may volunteer any personal service provided he or she is not compensated for the service by any other individual or person. This applies both to manual tasks (*i.e.*, stuffing envelopes, answering telephones, etc.) and to specialized services (*i.e.*, services provided by musicians, accountants, etc.). Whether a contribution has occurred depends upon whether the work performed is considered “volunteer services.” Whether time is spent on a volunteer basis depends upon whether the services are rendered during time that is the individual’s own time to spend as he or she sees fit. If services are rendered after working hours, they will typically be viewed as exempted volunteer services.

(b) In accordance with subsection (a) above, certain professional services, such as legal and accounting services, which typically have fees associated with them, may be provided to a committee on a volunteer basis, provided the need for the services arises from the committee. For example, accounting or bookkeeping services involved with handling the committee’s contributions and expenditures may be provided to a committee on a volunteer basis and will not count as an “in-kind” contribution even if no fees are charged.

§ 605 EXPENDITURES – DATE MADE

(a) The date of an expenditure is the date the amount is readily ascertainable by the person making the expenditure, except as provided in subsection (b) of this section.

(b) If, under normal business practices, the amount of an expenditure is not known or readily ascertainable until receipt of a periodic bill, the date of the expenditure is the date the bill is received. Examples of expenditures to which this subsection is applicable are expenditures for utilities and telephone bills.

(c) An expenditure by credit card or in other ways charged to an account must be included in the report for the period during which the charge was made, not in the report for the period during which the statement from the credit card company or charge account was received.

§ 606 STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION

(a)(1)(A) A ballot question committee or a legislative question committee shall file a statement of organization with the Arkansas Ethics Commission within five (5) days of receiving contributions or making expenditures in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500) for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question.

(B) The Arkansas Ethics Commission shall maintain the statement of organization until notified of the committee's dissolution.

(2) A ballot question committee or legislative question committee failing to file a statement of organization required by this section shall be subject to a late filing fee not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each day the statement remains not filed.

(b) The statement of organization for a ballot question committee as defined in § 600(c)(1) of these rules or a legislative question committee as defined in § 600 (1)(1) of these rules shall include the following information:

(1) The name, street address, and where available, the telephone number of the committee. A committee address and telephone number may be that of the residence of an officer or director of the committee;

(2) The name, street address, and if available, the telephone number of the treasurer and other principal officers and directors of the committee;

(3) The name and address of each financial institution in which the committee deposits money or anything else of monetary value;

(4) The name of each person who is a member of the committee. A person that is not an individual may be listed by its name without also listing its own members, if any; and

(5) A brief statement identifying the substance of each ballot or legislative question, the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of which the committee seeks to influence or of each legislative question, the passage or defeat of which the committee seeks to influence, and if known, the date each ballot or legislative question shall be presented to a popular vote at an election.

(c) The statement of organization for a ballot question committee as defined in § 600(c)(2) of these rules or a legislative question committee as defined in § 600(1)(2) of these rules shall include:

(1)(A) The name, the street address, and if available, the telephone number of the committee.

(B) The address and telephone number of a committee in subdivision (c)(1)(A) of this section may be that of the residence of an officer or a director of the committee;

(2) The name, street address, and if available, the telephone number of the treasurer and the other principal officers and directors of the committee;

(3) The name and address of each financial institution in which the committee deposits money or anything else of monetary value;

(4)(A) The name of each person who is a member of the committee.

(B) A person that is not an individual may be listed by its name without also listing its own members, if any; and

(5) A brief statement identifying the substance of each ballot or legislative question, the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of which the committee seeks to influence, and if known, the date each ballot or legislative question shall be presented to a popular vote at an election.

(d) When any of the information required in a statement of organization is changed, an amendment shall be filed within ten (10) days to reflect the change, except that changes in individual membership may be filed when the next financial report is required. A committee failing to file a change as required shall be subject to a late filing fee not exceeding twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for each day the change remains not filed.

§ 607 FILING OF FINANCIAL REPORTS

(a) A ballot question committee or a legislative question committee which either receives contributions or makes expenditures in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500) for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question shall file with the Arkansas Ethics Commission financial reports as required by §§ 608 through 610.

(b) An individual person who on his or her own behalf expends in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500), excluding contributions, for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question shall file with the Arkansas Ethics Commission financial reports as required by §§ 608 through 610.

(c) An elected official expending public funds in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500) for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question shall file with the Arkansas Ethics Commission financial reports as required by §§ 608 through 610.

(d) Except as provided in subsection (f) of this section, any report required by these rules shall be deemed timely filed if it is:

(1) Hand delivered to the Arkansas Ethics Commission on or before the date due;

(2) Mailed to the Arkansas Ethics Commission, properly addressed, postage prepaid, bearing a postmark indicating that it was received by the post office or common carrier on or before the date due;

(3) Received via facsimile by the Arkansas Ethics Commission on or before the date due, provided that the original is received by the Commission within ten (10) days of the transmission; or

(4) Received by the Arkansas Ethics Commission in a readable electronic format which is approved by the Commission.

(e) Whenever a report under these rules becomes due on a day which is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the report shall be due the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.

(f) A preelection report is timely filed if it is received by the Arkansas Ethics Commission no later than seven (7) days prior to the election for which it is filed.

(g) A final financial report as described in § 610(a)(3) is required regardless of whether a ballot question committee, legislative question committee, individual, or elected official³ received contributions or made expenditures in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500).

§ 608 CONTENTS OF FINANCIAL REPORTS

A financial report of a ballot question committee, a legislative question committee, an individual person or an elected official, as required by § 607, shall contain the following information:

(1) The name, address, and telephone number of the committee, individual person or elected official filing the report;

(2)(A) For a ballot question committee as defined in § 600 (c)(1) of these rules or legislative question committee as defined in § 600 (l)(1) of these rules:

³ See Footnote 1.

(i) The total amount of contributions received during the period covered by the financial report;

(ii) The total amount of expenditures made by the committee or on behalf of the committee by an advertising agency, public relations firm, or political consultant during the period covered by the financial report;

(iii) The cumulative amount of contributions and expenditures reported under § 608(2)(A)(i) and (ii) for each ballot question or legislative question;

(iv) The balance of cash and cash equivalents on hand at the beginning and the end of the period covered by the financial report;

(v) The total amount of contributions received during the period covered by the financial report from persons who contributed less than fifty dollars (\$50.00), and the cumulative amount of that total for each ballot question or legislative question;

(vi) The total amount of contributions received during the period covered by the financial report from persons who contributed fifty dollars (\$50.00) or more, and the cumulative amount of that total for each ballot question or legislative question;

(vii) The name and street address of each person who contributed fifty dollars (\$50.00) or more during the period covered by the financial report, together with the amount contributed, the date of receipt, and the cumulative amount contributed by that person for each ballot question or legislative question;

(viii) For each person listed under § 608(2)(A)(vii) of this section, the contributor's principal place of business, employer, occupation, the amount contributed, the date the contribution was accepted by the committee, and the cumulative amount contributed for each ballot question or legislative question;

(ix) The name and address of each person who contributed a nonmoney item, together with a description of the item, the date of receipt, and the value, not including volunteer service by individuals;

(x) A list of all expenditures by category, including without limitation the following: (a) advertising; (b) direct mail; (c) office supplies; (d) travel; (e) expenses; and (f) telephone; and

(xi) The total amount of nonitemized expenditures made during the period covered by the financial report;

(B) For a ballot question committee as defined in § 600(c)(2) of these rules or a legislative question committee as defined in § 600 (1)(2) of these rules shall include the following information:

(i) The total amount of contributions made by the committee to another ballot or legislative question committee during the period covered by the financial report; and

(ii) The cumulative amount of contributions under subdivision (2)(B)(i).

(C) For an individual person:

(i) The total amount of expenditures made by the individual person or on behalf of the individual person by an advertising agency, public relations firm, or political consultant during the period covered by the financial report; and

(ii) The cumulative amount of expenditures for each ballot question or legislative question; and

(D) For an elected official using public funds:⁴

(i) The total amount of expenditures made by the elected official using public funds or on behalf of the elected official using public funds⁵ by an advertising agency, public relations firm, or political consultant during the period covered by the financial report; and

(ii) The cumulative amount of expenditures for each ballot question or legislative question; and

(3) The name and street address of each person to whom expenditures totaling one hundred dollars (\$100) or more were made by the committee, individual person, or elected official using public funds, or on behalf of the committee, individual person, or elected official using public funds⁶ by an advertising agency, public relations firm, or political consultant, together with the date and amount of each separate expenditure to each person during the period covered by the financial report and the purpose of each expenditure.

§ 609 VERIFICATION OF FINANCIAL REPORTS

All financial reports filed by committees, individuals, public servants, or governmental bodies⁷ shall be verified by affidavit. This affidavit shall state that, to the best of the filer's knowledge and belief, the information so disclosed is a complete, true and accurate financial statement of contributions and expenditures.

⁴ See Footnote 1.

⁵ See Footnote 1.

⁶ See Footnote 1.

⁷ See Footnote 1.

§ 610 TIME TO FILE FINANCIAL REPORTS – LATE FEE

(a)(1) The first financial reports shall be filed no later than fifteen (15) days following the month in which the five hundred dollar (\$500) threshold of § 607 is met and thereafter no later than fifteen (15) days after the end of each month until the election is held. Provided, however, for any month in which certain days of that month are included in a preelection financial report required under subdivision (a)(2) of this section, no monthly report for that month shall be due, but those days of that month shall be carried forward and included in the final financial report.

(2) Additionally, a preelection financial report shall be filed no fewer than seven (7) days prior to any election on the ballot question or legislative question, such statement to have a closing date of ten (10) days prior to the election.

(3) Furthermore, a final financial report shall be filed no later than thirty (30) days after the election.

(b) A ballot question committee, legislative question committee, or individual person who files a late financial report shall be subject to a late filing fee not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each day the report remains unfiled.

§ 611 DISSOLUTION AND DISPOSITION OF FUNDS

Upon dissolution, a ballot question committee or a legislative question committee shall so notify the Arkansas Ethics Commission in writing. Any remaining funds on hand at the time of dissolution shall be turned over to either: (i) the Treasurer of State for the benefit of the General Revenue Fund Account of the State Apportionment Fund; (ii) a political party as defined in § 600(n) of these rules or a political party caucus of the General Assembly, the Senate, or House of Representatives; (iii) a nonprofit organization which is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; (iv) cities of the first class, cities of the second class, or incorporated towns; or (v) the contributors to the ballot question committee or legislative question committee.

§ 612 INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND RETENTION OF RECORDS

(a) All statements of organization and financial reports required by these rules shall be open to public inspection at the office of the Arkansas Ethics Commission during regular office hours.

(b) All records supporting the reports filed under these rules shall be: (1) made available to the Arkansas Ethics Commission; and (2) retained by the filer for a period of four (4) years after the date of filing the report.

**§ 613 PROHIBITION AGAINST PUBLIC SERVANTS
CIRCULATING AN INITIATIVE OR REFERENDUM PETITION**

It shall be unlawful for any public servant, as defined in § 600(s), to circulate an initiative or referendum petition or to solicit signatures on an initiative or referendum petition in any public office of the state, county, or municipal governments of Arkansas or during the usual office hours or while on duty for any state agency or any county or municipal government in Arkansas.

**§ 614 PROHIBITION AGAINST USE OF PUBLIC OFFICE/ROOM
OR PERSONAL PROPERTY PROVIDED WITH PUBLIC FUNDS**

It shall be unlawful for any public servant, as defined in § 600(s), to use any office or room furnished at public expense to distribute any letters, circulars, or other campaign materials unless such office or room is regularly used by members of the public for such purposes without regard to political affiliation. It shall further be unlawful for any public servant to use for campaign purposes any item of personal property provided with public funds. As used herein, “campaign materials” and “campaign purposes” refer to (i) the campaign of a candidate for public office, and (ii) efforts to support or oppose a ballot measure, except as provided in Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-111.⁸

§ 615 SCOPE

Nothing in these rules is intended to limit, waive, or abrogate the scope of any statutory or common law privilege, including, but not limited to, the work product doctrine and attorney-client privilege.

⁸ See Footnote 1.



STATE OF ARKANSAS
SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS
GOVERNOR

Request for Governor's Approval of Proposed Rule or Regulation

Department /Agency: Arkansas Ethics Commission

Short Title of Rule: Rules on Ballot and Legislative Question Committees

New Rule: Yes No

Amendment to Existing Rule: Yes No

State Mandate: Yes No

Federal Mandate: Yes No

If yes, please provide the legal citation of the mandate:

Legal Authority for Rule: 7-6-217 (g)

Proposed Effective Date: TBD

Emergency Rule: Yes No

Expedited Rule Requested: Yes No

Summary of Proposed New Rule or Proposed Amendment to Existing Rule:

The purpose of this proposed amendment is to bring the Rules on Ballot and Legislative Question Committees into conformity with the legislation passed during the 94th General Assembly of the Arkansas Legislature. Act 455 raised the contribution limit to an approved Political Action Committee ("PAC") on an annual basis from \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year.

Financial Impact: Yes No Unknown; **If yes or unknown, please explain:**

Public Hearing Occurred on Rule: Yes No TBD for date

Controversial: Yes No

Two Rules Repealed:

Exception from the Governor: Requested

The Commission is seeking that an exemption be granted to the provision requiring that the agency must submit two (2) rules for repeal for every one (1) rule presented for rulemaking. It is the position of the Commission that this proposed amendment would not create a new rule, but rather keep existing rules up-to-date and in conformity with the law. If this is considered a new rule, then the Commission respectfully requests the exemption be granted.

Likewise, the Commission is seeking to repeal the “Rules on Display of Campaign Literature on Vehicles of Candidates of Public Official While on State Capitol Grounds”.

First Rule Repealed: Brief explanation of why repeal is appropriate:

Second Rule Repealed: Brief explanation of why repeal is appropriate:

Documents Required for Approval Process

Please note that the Governor’s office will not begin the approval process if any of the following applicable documents are not enclosed with the approval request.

- BLR Questionnaire
- BLR Financial Impact Statement
- Proposed Rule - clean version
- Mark-Up of Rule, if amended from previous version
- Copy of Act or Regulation, if Rule is pursuant to State or Federal mandate

Contact Information

Department POC for Rules Process: Graham F. Sloan

Department POC for this Rule: Graham F. Sloan

NOTE: All documents must be returned to the Governor’s Counsel as a single PDF file.

Mark-up

Formatted: Right

ARKANSAS ETHICS COMMISSION

RULES ON BALLOT AND LEGISLATIVE QUESTION COMMITTEES

ARKANSAS ETHICS COMMISSION
Post Office Box 1917
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1917
(501) 324-9600 or (800) 422-7773
Facsimile (501) 324-9606

TABLE OF CONTENTS

§ 600 DEFINITIONS 1

§ 601 CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES – LIMITS 5

§ 602 CONTRIBUTIONS – DATE RECEIVED..... 5

§ 603 IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS – REPORTING AND VALUE..... 5

§ 604 VOLUNTEER SERVICES – EXCEPTION TO IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION 6

§ 605 EXPENDITURES – DATE MADE 6

§ 606 STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION 7

§ 607 FILING OF FINANCIAL REPORTS 8

§ 608 CONTENTS OF FINANCIAL REPORTS 9

§ 609 VERIFICATION OF FINANCIAL REPORTS..... 11

§ 610 TIME TO FILE FINANCIAL REPORTS – LATE FEE 11

§ 611 DISSOLUTION AND DISPOSITION OF FUNDS..... 11

§ 612 INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND RETENTION OF RECORDS 12

§ 613 PROHIBITION AGAINST PUBLIC SERVANTS
CIRCULATING AN INITIATIVE OR REFERENDUM PETITION 12

§ 614 PROHIBITION AGAINST USE OF PUBLIC OFFICE/ROOM OR
PERSONAL PROPERTY PROVIDED WITH PUBLIC FUNDS 12

§ 615 SCOPE..... 12

§ 600 **DEFINITIONS**

(a) **Approved Political Action Committee** – As used in these rules, the term “approved political action committee” means any person who:

- (i) Receives contributions from one (1) or more persons in order to make contributions to candidates, campaign committees, ballot question committees, legislative question committees, political parties, county political party committees, or other political action committees;
- (ii) Does not accept any contribution or cumulative contributions in excess of ~~five thousand dollars (\$5,000)~~ ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) from any person in any calendar year; and
- (iii) Registers pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 7-6-215 prior to making contributions.

An approved political action committee shall not include an organized political party as defined in Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-101, a county political party committee, the candidate's own campaign committee, an exploratory committee, or a ballot question committee or legislative question committee.

(b) **Ballot Question** – As used in these rules, the term “ballot question” means a question in the form of a statewide, county, municipal, or school district initiative or referendum which is submitted or intended to be submitted to a popular vote at an election, whether or not it qualifies for the ballot.

(c)(1) **Ballot Question Committee** – As used in these rules, the term “ballot question committee” means any person, located within or outside Arkansas, that receives contributions for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of any ballot question, or any person, other than an elected official expending public funds,¹ or an individual, located within or

¹ Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-111 was established by Act 312 of 2013 and falls outside of the Arkansas Ethics Commission's jurisdiction. Pursuant thereto, an “elected official” or “a person appointed to an elective office” is permitted to expend or permit the expenditure of public funds to support or oppose a ballot measure. However, Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-111(b) provides that “[i]t is unlawful for a public servant or a governmental body to expend or permit the expenditure of public funds to support or oppose a ballot measure.” With regard to this prohibition, it is noted that the term “public funds” is defined to mean “funds, moneys, receivables, grants, investments, instruments, real or personal property, or other assets, liabilities, equities, revenues, receipts, or disbursements belonging to, held by, or passed through a governmental body[.]” In addition, the term “public servant” is defined to mean “an individual who is (i) Employed by a governmental body; (ii) Appointed to serve a governmental body; or (iii) Appointed to a governmental body.” That definition goes on to state that “Public servant’ does not include: (i) An elected official; or (ii) A person appointed to an elective office.” It is noted that Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-111 does not: limit the freedom of speech of a public servant or governmental body, including without limitation verbal expressions of views supporting or opposing a ballot measure; prohibit a governmental body from expressing an opinion on a ballot measure through the passage of a resolution or proclamation; prohibit the incidental use of state resources by a public servant, including without limitation travel costs, when speaking at an event in which a ballot measure is discussed if the subject matter of the

outside Arkansas, who makes expenditures for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of any ballot question.

(2) A person other than an individual or an approved political action committee as defined in § 600(a) of these rules, located within or outside Arkansas, also qualifies as a ballot question committee if two percent (2%) or more of its annual revenues, operating expenses, or funds are used to make a contribution or contributions to another ballot question committee and if the contribution or contributions exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) in value.

(d)(1) Contribution – As used in these rules, the term “contribution” means, whether direct or indirect, advances, deposits, transfers of funds, contracts, or obligations, whether or not legally enforceable, payments, gifts, subscriptions, assessments, payment for services, dues, advancements, forbearance, loans, pledges or promises of money or anything of value, whether or not legally enforceable, to a person receiving same for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question.

(2) “Contribution” includes the purchase of tickets for events, such as dinners, luncheons, rallies, and similar fundraising events, and the granting of discounts or rebates by television and radio stations and newspapers, not extended on an equal basis to all persons seeking to expressly advocate the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question.

(3) “Contribution” shall not include noncompensated, nonreimbursed volunteer personal services or travel.

(e) Contribution and Expenditure – As used in these rules, “contribution and expenditure” shall not include activities designed solely to encourage individuals to register to vote or to vote, or any communication by a bona fide church or religious denomination to its own members or adherents for the sole purpose of protecting the right to practice the religious tenets of the church or religious denomination, and “expenditure” shall not include one made for communication by a person strictly with the person’s paid members or shareholders.

(f) Disqualification of a Ballot Question – As used in these rules, “disqualification of a ballot question” means any action or process, legal or otherwise, which seeks to prevent a ballot question from being on the ballot at an election.

speaking engagement is within the scope of the official duties and responsibilities of the public servant; or prohibit the dissemination of public information at a speaking engagement and the incidental use of state resources in the analysis and preparation of that public information if the subject matter of the public information is within the scope of the official duties and responsibilities of the public servant. Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-111 provides that a violation of the prohibition contained therein is a Class A misdemeanor, with the exception that a public servant who is found guilty or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to such a violation is ineligible to hold any office, employment, or appointment in a governmental body and that if a public servant is found guilty or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to such a violation while employed by a governmental body, he or she shall be removed from employment immediately.

(g) Elected Official – As used in these rules, “elected official” means any person holding an elective office of any governmental body, whether elected or appointed to the office.

(h) Expenditure – As used in these rules, the term “expenditure” means a purchase, payment, distribution, gift, loan, or advance of money or anything of value, and a contract, promise, or agreement to make an expenditure, for goods, services, materials, or facilities for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question.

(i) Governmental Body – As used in these rules, the term “governmental body” means any office, department, commission, council, board, committee, legislative body, agency, or other establishment of the executive, judicial, or legislative branch of the state, municipality, county, school district, improvement district, or any political district or subdivision thereof.

(j) In-kind Contribution – As used in these rules, the term “in-kind contribution” means a contribution of goods, services, or any other thing of value, or its use, other than money and includes an agreement made or other obligation incurred, whether legally enforceable or not, to make such a contribution in the future. A person makes an “in-kind contribution” whenever, in conjunction with the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question, such person purchases, sells or leases an item, or provides a service to or on behalf of a ballot or legislative question committee without charge or for a charge which is less than the fair market value of the item or service provided. The difference between the fair market value and the charge shall be the value of the in-kind contribution.

(k) Legislative Question – As used in these rules, the term “legislative question” means a question in the form of a measure referred by the General Assembly, a quorum court, a municipality, or a school district to a popular vote at an election.

(l)(1) Legislative Question Committee – As used in these rules, the term “legislative question committee” means any person, located within or outside Arkansas, that receives contributions for the purpose of expressly advocating the passage or defeat of any legislative question or any person, other than an elected official expending public funds,² or an individual, located within or outside Arkansas, who makes expenditures for the purpose of expressly advocating the passage or defeat of any legislative question.

(2) A person other than an individual or an approved political action committee as defined in § 600(a) of these rules, located within or outside Arkansas, also qualifies as a legislative question committee if two percent (2%) or more of its annual revenues, operating expenses, or funds are used to make a contribution or contributions to another legislative question committee and if the contribution or contributions exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) in value.

² See Footnote 1.

(m) Person – As used in these rules, the term “person” means any individual, business, proprietorship, firm, partnership, joint venture, syndicate, business trust, labor organization, company, corporation, association, committee, or any other organization or group of persons acting in concert. “Person” includes an elected official using public funds to expressly advocate the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of any ballot question or the passage or defeat of any legislative question.

(n) Political Party – As used in these rules, the term “political party” means any group of voters which, at the last preceding general election, polled for its candidate for Governor in the state or nominees for presidential electors at least three percent (3%) of the entire vote cast for the office, or which has filed a petition with the Secretary of State containing at the time of filing the signatures of at least ten thousand (10,000) registered voters in the State of Arkansas, declaring the intention of organizing a political party, the name of which shall be stated in the declaration, and of participating in the next general election, and which has been declared a new political party by the Secretary of State. When any political party fails to obtain three percent (3%) of the total votes cast at an election for the office of Governor or nominees for presidential electors, it shall cease to be a political party.

(o) Prohibited Political Action Committee – As used in these rules, the term “prohibited political action committee” means any person who receives contributions from one (1) or more persons in order to make contributions to candidates, ballot question committees, legislative question committees, political parties, county political party committees, or other political action committees but who does not meet the requirements of an approved political action committee. A prohibited political action committee shall not include a political party as defined in Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-101 or a political party that meets the requirements of Ark. Code Ann. § 7-7-205, the candidate's own campaign committee, a county political party committee, an exploratory committee, or a ballot or legislative question committee.

(p) Public Appointee – As used in these rules, the term “public appointee” means an individual who is appointed to a governmental body. It does not include an individual appointed to an elective office.

(q) Public Employee – As used in these rules, the term “public employee” means an individual who is employed by a governmental body or who is appointed to serve a governmental body. It does not include public officials or public appointees.

(r) Public Official – As used in these rules, the term “public official” means a legislator or any other person holding an elective office of any governmental body, whether elected or appointed to the office, and shall include such persons during the time period between the date they were elected and the date they took office. “Public official” includes without limitation a member of a school district board of directors.

(s) Public Servant – As used in these rules, the term “public servant” means all public officials, public employees, and public appointees.

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt

(t) Qualification of a Ballot Question – As used in these rules, “qualification of a ballot question” means any action or process, legal or otherwise, through which a ballot question obtains certification to be on the ballot at an election.

§ 601 CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES – LIMITS

(a) No ballot question committee or legislative question committee shall accept any contribution in cash, meaning currency or coin, which exceeds one hundred dollars (\$100).

(b) No ballot question committee or legislative question committee shall accept any contribution from a prohibited political action committee as defined in § 600(o). It shall be unlawful for a prohibited political action committee as defined in § 600(o) to make a contribution to a ballot question committee or a legislative question committee.

(c) No ballot question committee, legislative question committee, or individual shall make an expenditure in cash which exceeds fifty dollars (\$50.00) in conjunction with expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question.

(d) No contributions shall be made, directly or indirectly, by any person in a name other than the name by which the person is identified for legal purposes.

(e)(1) No person shall make an anonymous contribution totaling fifty dollars (\$50.00) or more to a ballot question committee or legislative question committee.

(2) Any such anonymous contribution actually received by any ballot question committee or legislative question committee shall be promptly paid by the recipient to the Arkansas Ethics Commission for deposit in the State Treasury as general revenues.

§ 602 CONTRIBUTIONS – DATE RECEIVED

A contribution to a ballot or legislative question committee shall be deemed to have been “received” or “accepted” when it has been delivered to a committee and not returned to the contributor within five (5) business days.

§ 603 IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS – REPORTING AND VALUE

(a) In addition to monetary contributions, committees are required to report the receipt of any “in-kind contributions,” as defined in § 600(j) of these rules.

(b) For reporting purposes, the value of an in-kind contribution shall be its fair market value if it had been purchased, sold or leased in the ordinary course of business. An in-kind contribution constitutes a contribution. Those transactions which are specifically excluded from the definition of “contribution” are likewise excluded from the definition of “in-kind contribution.”

(c) A person making an in-kind contribution shall place the value on such contribution when given. The committee may question the value set by the donor if it appears unreasonable and shall revalue the in-kind contribution to a reasonable value. The value of an in-kind contribution is a factual determination which shall be made by the Arkansas Ethics Commission.

(d) The costs associated with any news story, commentary or editorial distributed in the ordinary course of business by a broadcasting station, newspaper or other periodical publication do not constitute an in-kind contribution.

§ 604 VOLUNTEER SERVICES – EXCEPTION TO IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION

(a) In addition to the other exceptions noted in these rules, the value of volunteer services provided without compensation do not constitute an in-kind contribution. Accordingly, an individual may volunteer any personal service provided he or she is not compensated for the service by any other individual or person. This applies both to manual tasks (*i.e.*, stuffing envelopes, answering telephones, etc.) and to specialized services (*i.e.*, services provided by musicians, accountants, etc.). Whether a contribution has occurred depends upon whether the work performed is considered “volunteer services.” Whether time is spent on a volunteer basis depends upon whether the services are rendered during time that is the individual’s own time to spend as he or she sees fit. If services are rendered after working hours, they will typically be viewed as exempted volunteer services.

(b) In accordance with subsection (a) above, certain professional services, such as legal and accounting services, which typically have fees associated with them, may be provided to a committee on a volunteer basis, provided the need for the services arises from the committee. For example, accounting or bookkeeping services involved with handling the committee’s contributions and expenditures may be provided to a committee on a volunteer basis and will not count as an “in-kind” contribution even if no fees are charged.

§ 605 EXPENDITURES – DATE MADE

(a) The date of an expenditure is the date the amount is readily ascertainable by the person making the expenditure, except as provided in subsection (b) of this section.

(b) If, under normal business practices, the amount of an expenditure is not known or readily ascertainable until receipt of a periodic bill, the date of the expenditure is the date the bill is received. Examples of expenditures to which this subsection is applicable are expenditures for utilities and telephone bills.

(c) An expenditure by credit card or in other ways charged to an account must be included in the report for the period during which the charge was made, not in the report for the period during which the statement from the credit card company or charge account was received.

§ 606 STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION

(a)(1)(A) A ballot question committee or a legislative question committee shall file a statement of organization with the Arkansas Ethics Commission within five (5) days of receiving contributions or making expenditures in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500) for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question.

(B) The Arkansas Ethics Commission shall maintain the statement of organization until notified of the committee's dissolution.

(2) A ballot question committee or legislative question committee failing to file a statement of organization required by this section shall be subject to a late filing fee not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each day the statement remains not filed.

(b) The statement of organization for a ballot question committee as defined in § 600(c)(1) of these rules or a legislative question committee as defined in § 600 (l)(1) of these rules shall include the following information:

(1) The name, street address, and where available, the telephone number of the committee. A committee address and telephone number may be that of the residence of an officer or director of the committee;

(2) The name, street address, and if available, the telephone number of the treasurer and other principal officers and directors of the committee;

(3) The name and address of each financial institution in which the committee deposits money or anything else of monetary value;

(4) The name of each person who is a member of the committee. A person that is not an individual may be listed by its name without also listing its own members, if any; and

(5) A brief statement identifying the substance of each ballot or legislative question, the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of which the committee seeks to influence or of each legislative question, the passage or defeat of which the committee seeks to influence, and if known, the date each ballot or legislative question shall be presented to a popular vote at an election.

Formatted: No underline

(c) The statement of organization for a ballot question committee as defined in § 600(c)(2) of these rules or a legislative question committee as defined in § 600(l)(2) of these rules shall include:

(1)(A) The name, the street address, and if available, the telephone number of the committee.

(B) The address and telephone number of a committee in subdivision (c)(1)(A) of this section may be that of the residence of an officer or a director of the committee;

(2) The name, street address, and if available, the telephone number of the treasurer and the other principal officers and directors of the committee;

(3) The name and address of each financial institution in which the committee deposits money or anything else of monetary value;

(4)(A) The name of each person who is a member of the committee.

(B) A person that is not an individual may be listed by its name without also listing its own members, if any; and

(5) A brief statement identifying the substance of each ballot or legislative question, the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of which the committee seeks to influence, and if known, the date each ballot or legislative question shall be presented to a popular vote at an election.

(d) When any of the information required in a statement of organization is changed, an amendment shall be filed within ten (10) days to reflect the change, except that changes in individual membership may be filed when the next financial report is required. A committee failing to file a change as required shall be subject to a late filing fee not exceeding twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for each day the change remains not filed.

§ 607 FILING OF FINANCIAL REPORTS

(a) A ballot question committee or a legislative question committee which either receives contributions or makes expenditures in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500) for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question shall file with the Arkansas Ethics Commission financial reports as required by §§ 608 through 610.

(b) An individual person who on his or her own behalf expends in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500), excluding contributions, for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question shall file with the Arkansas Ethics Commission financial reports as required by §§ 608 through 610.

(c) An elected official expending public funds in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500) for the purpose of expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the passage or defeat of a legislative question shall file with the Arkansas Ethics Commission financial reports as required by §§ 608 through 610.

(d) Except as provided in subsection (f) of this section, any report required by these rules shall be deemed timely filed if it is:

(1) Hand delivered to the Arkansas Ethics Commission on or before the date due;

(2) Mailed to the Arkansas Ethics Commission, properly addressed, postage prepaid, bearing a postmark indicating that it was received by the post office or common carrier on or before the date due;

(3) Received via facsimile by the Arkansas Ethics Commission on or before the date due, provided that the original is received by the Commission within ten (10) days of the transmission; or

(4) Received by the Arkansas Ethics Commission in a readable electronic format which is approved by the Commission.

(e) Whenever a report under these rules becomes due on a day which is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the report shall be due the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.

(f) A preelection report is timely filed if it is received by the Arkansas Ethics Commission no later than seven (7) days prior to the election for which it is filed.

(g) A final financial report as described in § 610(a)(3) is required regardless of whether a ballot question committee, legislative question committee, individual, or elected official³ received contributions or made expenditures in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500).

§ 608 CONTENTS OF FINANCIAL REPORTS

A financial report of a ballot question committee, a legislative question committee, an individual person or an elected official, as required by § 607, shall contain the following information:

(1) The name, address, and telephone number of the committee, individual person or elected official filing the report;

(2)(A) For a ballot question committee as defined in § 600 (c)(1) of these rules or legislative question committee as defined in § 600 (l)(1) of these rules:

³ See Footnote 1.

Agency # 153.00

(i) The total amount of contributions received during the period covered by the financial report;

(ii) The total amount of expenditures made by the committee or on behalf of the committee by an advertising agency, public relations firm, or political consultant during the period covered by the financial report;

(iii) The cumulative amount of contributions and expenditures reported under § 608(2)(A)(i) and (ii) for each ballot question or legislative question;

(iv) The balance of cash and cash equivalents on hand at the beginning and the end of the period covered by the financial report;

(v) The total amount of contributions received during the period covered by the financial report from persons who contributed less than fifty dollars (\$50.00), and the cumulative amount of that total for each ballot question or legislative question;

(vi) The total amount of contributions received during the period covered by the financial report from persons who contributed fifty dollars (\$50.00) or more, and the cumulative amount of that total for each ballot question or legislative question;

(vii) The name and street address of each person who contributed fifty dollars (\$50.00) or more during the period covered by the financial report, together with the amount contributed, the date of receipt, and the cumulative amount contributed by that person for each ballot question or legislative question;

(viii) For each person listed under § 608(2)(A)(vii) of this section, the contributor's principal place of business, employer, occupation, the amount contributed, the date the contribution was accepted by the committee, and the cumulative amount contributed for each ballot question or legislative question;

(ix) The name and address of each person who contributed a nonmoney item, together with a description of the item, the date of receipt, and the value, not including volunteer service by individuals;

(x) A list of all expenditures by category, including without limitation the following: (a) advertising; (b) direct mail; (c) office supplies; (d) travel; (e) expenses; and (f) telephone; and

(xi) The total amount of nonitemized expenditures made during the period covered by the financial report;

(B) For a ballot question committee as defined in § 600(c)(2) of these rules or a legislative question committee as defined in § 600 (l)(2) of these rules shall include the following information:

Agency # 153.00

(i) The total amount of contributions made by the committee to another ballot or legislative question committee during the period covered by the financial report; and

(ii) The cumulative amount of contributions under subdivision (2)(B)(i).

(C) For an individual person:

(i) The total amount of expenditures made by the individual person or on behalf of the individual person by an advertising agency, public relations firm, or political consultant during the period covered by the financial report; and

(ii) The cumulative amount of expenditures for each ballot question or legislative question; and

(D) For an elected official using public funds:⁴

(i) The total amount of expenditures made by the elected official using public funds or on behalf of the elected official using public funds⁵ by an advertising agency, public relations firm, or political consultant during the period covered by the financial report; and

(ii) The cumulative amount of expenditures for each ballot question or legislative question; and

(3) The name and street address of each person to whom expenditures totaling one hundred dollars (\$100) or more were made by the committee, individual person, or elected official using public funds, or on behalf of the committee, individual person, or elected official using public funds⁶ by an advertising agency, public relations firm, or political consultant, together with the date and amount of each separate expenditure to each person during the period covered by the financial report and the purpose of each expenditure.

§ 609 VERIFICATION OF FINANCIAL REPORTS

All financial reports filed by committees, individuals, public servants, or governmental bodies⁷ shall be verified by affidavit. This affidavit shall state that, to the best of the filer's knowledge and belief, the information so disclosed is a complete, true and accurate financial statement of contributions and expenditures.

⁴ See Footnote 1.

⁵ See Footnote 1.

⁶ See Footnote 1.

⁷ See Footnote 1.

§ 610 TIME TO FILE FINANCIAL REPORTS – LATE FEE

(a)(1) The first financial reports shall be filed no later than fifteen (15) days following the month in which the five hundred dollar (\$500) threshold of § 607 is met and thereafter no later than fifteen (15) days after the end of each month until the election is held. Provided, however, for any month in which certain days of that month are included in a preelection financial report required under subdivision (a)(2) of this section, no monthly report for that month shall be due, but those days of that month shall be carried forward and included in the final financial report.

(2) Additionally, a preelection financial report shall be filed no fewer than seven (7) days prior to any election on the ballot question or legislative question, such statement to have a closing date of ten (10) days prior to the election.

(3) Furthermore, a final financial report shall be filed no later than thirty (30) days after the election.

(b) A ballot question committee, legislative question committee, or individual person who files a late financial report shall be subject to a late filing fee not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each day the report remains unfiled.

§ 611 DISSOLUTION AND DISPOSITION OF FUNDS

Upon dissolution, a ballot question committee or a legislative question committee shall so notify the Arkansas Ethics Commission in writing. Any remaining funds on hand at the time of dissolution shall be turned over to either: (i) the Treasurer of State for the benefit of the General Revenue Fund Account of the State Apportionment Fund; (ii) a political party as defined in § 600(n) of these rules or a political party caucus of the General Assembly, the Senate, or House of Representatives; (iii) a nonprofit organization which is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; (iv) cities of the first class, cities of the second class, or incorporated towns; or (v) the contributors to the ballot question committee or legislative question committee.

§ 612 INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND RETENTION OF RECORDS

(a) All statements of organization and financial reports required by these rules shall be open to public inspection at the office of the Arkansas Ethics Commission during regular office hours.

(b) All records supporting the reports filed under these rules shall be: (1) made available to the Arkansas Ethics Commission; and (2) retained by the filer for a period of four (4) years after the date of filing the report.

**§ 613 PROHIBITION AGAINST PUBLIC SERVANTS
CIRCULATING AN INITIATIVE OR REFERENDUM PETITION**

It shall be unlawful for any public servant, as defined in § 600(s), to circulate an initiative or referendum petition or to solicit signatures on an initiative or referendum petition in any public office of the state, county, or municipal governments of Arkansas or during the usual office hours or while on duty for any state agency or any county or municipal government in Arkansas.

**§ 614 PROHIBITION AGAINST USE OF PUBLIC OFFICE/ROOM
OR PERSONAL PROPERTY PROVIDED WITH PUBLIC FUNDS**

It shall be unlawful for any public servant, as defined in § 600(s), to use any office or room furnished at public expense to distribute any letters, circulars, or other campaign materials unless such office or room is regularly used by members of the public for such purposes without regard to political affiliation. It shall further be unlawful for any public servant to use for campaign purposes any item of personal property provided with public funds. As used herein, “campaign materials” and “campaign purposes” refer to (i) the campaign of a candidate for public office, and (ii) efforts to support or oppose a ballot measure, except as provided in Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-111.⁸

§ 615 SCOPE

Nothing in these rules is intended to limit, waive, or abrogate the scope of any statutory or common law privilege, including, but not limited to, the work product doctrine and attorney-client privilege.

⁸ See Footnote 1.

Summary

Proposed Amendment to the Rules on Ballot and Legislative Question Committees

PURPOSE:

The purpose of these proposed amendments is to bring the Rules on Ballot and Legislative Question Committees into conformity with the legislation passed during the 94th General Assembly of the Arkansas Legislature.

DISCUSSION:

Act 455 of 2023 raised the contribution limit to Political Action Committees (“PAC”) on an annual basis from \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year. This amendment needs to be reflected in the Rules on Ballot and Legislative Question Committees.

In rule 600 (r), in order to mirror Ark. Code Ann. 21-8-402 (17), the definition of “public official” needs to be amended to add, “Public official” includes without limitation a member of a school district board of directors.” There is a stray underline in rule 606(b)(5) that needs to be removed.