Avoiding Common Campaign Filing Errors and Mishaps

For many 2020 campaigns, this is your first time preparing a campaign statement and first time using the NetFile system. We've compiled some tips to help you avoid common oversights and mistakes that can lead to problems filing your statement on time or require an amendment.

Why won't NetFile accept my filing?

One of the most common reasons new filers experience problems completing their filings is failing to enter all the necessary committee information in their NetFile account. You can use the "Committee Set-up Wizard" on your NetFile account home page to check and update your information. The information should match your most current Form 410 - Statement of Organization.

- **Signer Information**

  The first and last name of the candidate and treasurer must be entered as they should appear on the signature line of your statement. ***Signature names for both the candidate and the treasurer must be entered correctly or NetFile will not allow you to e-file your statement.***

  Statements by candidate-controlled committees must be signed by both the candidate and the treasurer. Even if the candidate is acting as committee treasurer, a signature must be entered on both signature lines.

- **Statement Information**

  When you draft your Form 460, be sure to enter the period start and end date correctly, as well as the statement type (pre-election for this deadline) and election date. Not entering the period end date or statement type correctly is another common reason e-filings are rejected by the filing system.

Statements Missing Required Information

Be sure to include all required information. For example, each monetary or nonmonetary contribution or loan of $100 or more, must be itemized and list the date received, amount of the contribution, full name, and street address including zip code of the contributor. If the contribution is from an individual, the contributor's occupation and employer must also be disclosed. If the contributor is self-employed, that fact also must be noted along with the name of his or her business.

Filers failing to disclose required information may be subject to monetary penalties.

Timely public information is crucial – Late penalties enforced

Late filing of campaign disclosure statements denies voters and the public of important information that should be current and readily available. For campaign finance disclosure, timely public information is crucial, as the value of required pre-election disclosure declines significantly after the election. Late filings for pre-election statements, late statements reporting large contributions or expenditures, late 24-hour contribution reports, and late 24-hour independent expenditure reports, all deprive the public of important information in the period close to election time and may also impact the lifting of voluntary campaign expenditure ceilings impacting campaigns.

Extensions to campaign filing deadlines are not permitted by state law, and late and non-filers are subject to fees and penalties. In addition, the Commission may publish online a list of late and non-filers during the pre-election period.

- **Get the assistance you need**

  For questions about completing your campaign statement and requirements under the California Political Reform Act, contact the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) by email at advice@fppc.ca.gov or call 1-866-ASK-FPPC (1-866-275-3772). Telephone advice is available Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

  For NetFile technical assistance, email filerhelp@netfile.com.

  For questions about Oakland campaign rules, contact Public Ethics Commission staff by email at ethicscommission@oaklandca.gov.