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Ohio Secretary of State

Notification to Statewide, General Assembly and Court of Appeals Candidates of Requirements to File Campaign Finance Reports by Electronic Means

Form 30-N
R.C. 3517.11
(03/2026)

Starting January 1, 2001, the campaign committee of candidates for statewide and general assembly offices came under the provisions of R.C. 3517.106, which mandates the filing of campaign finance reports required by R.C. 3517.10, by electronic means of transmission in certain circumstances. As of March 31, 2005, these provisions also apply to candidates for the office of judge of a court of appeals.

Statewide Candidates

Unless the committee's candidate has first filed an Electronic Filing Notice of Hardship (Form 31-DD), campaign committees of candidates for the office of governor, attorney general, Secretary of State, treasurer of state, auditor of state, state board of education, justice of the Supreme Court and chief justice of the Supreme Court that file a campaign finance report containing more than $10,000 in total contributions or more than $10,000 in total expenditures **must** file that report by electronic means of transmission.

Total Contributions. Sum of monetary contributions received (line 2 of cover page), in-kind contributions received (line 7 of the cover page) and total of new loans received during reporting period.

Total Expenditures. Monetary expenditures (line 5 of the cover page).

General Assembly and Court of Appeals Candidates

Unless the committee's candidate has first filed an Electronic Filing Notice of Hardship (Form 31-DD), campaign committees of candidates for general assembly and judge of a court of appeals that file a campaign finance report containing more than $10,000 in total contributions **must** file that report by electronic means of transmission.

Total Contributions. Sum of monetary contributions received (line 2 of cover page), in-kind contributions received (line 7 of the cover page) and total of new loans received during reporting period.

If the report is filed by electronic means of transmission, the committee is not required to file a paper copy of the report with the local board of elections. A copy of the canceled checks or paid receipts for the report should be mailed directly to the Secretary of State's office at the address listed below in this notice.

Notice of Hardship

If the required filing of campaign finance reports by electronic means constitutes a hardship for a campaign committee of a statewide, general assembly or judge of a court of appeals candidate, the candidate may, prior to each filing deadline, file an Electronic Filing Notice of Hardship (Form 31-DD). The campaign committee may then pay a data entry fee and file the report on paper at the Secretary of State's office by the required filing deadline. R.C. 3517.106(J)(1)(d). A statewide candidate is not eligible to file an Electronic Filing Notice of Hardship if the report contains $25,000 or more in expenditures during that reporting period.

To determine the data entry fee:
Count the total number of contribution entries and the total number of expenditure entries in the report. Write these two figures in the margin of the Ohio Campaign Finance Report (Form 30-A). Do not count Loan and Debt entries. Next, multiply the total number of entries by 0.30 to determine the fee due. Attach a check or money order to the report when it is filed, made payable to the Ohio Secretary of State, for the amount calculated.

Filing Options

The Secretary of State has developed two methods for a committee to file a report electronically. Which method is best for your committee will depend on the number of contributions and expenditures in your report, your level of computer knowledge, and whether your committee's records are computerized. The options are:

Online Filing- The new Campaign Finance Online Filing System (CFOFS) is accessible from the Secretary of State's website *OhioSoS.gov* under the campaign finance section. Committees log on and enter their contribution and expenditure information. When a report is due, the committee submits it. CFOFS contains many helpful features designed to assist the filer. These features include:

- Address book. This feature saves each contribution and each expenditure in separate address books, allowing the entity to be quickly added at subsequent transactions.
- PAC number look up. This feature allows a user to look up the proper name and registration number of any active PAC on file with the Secretary of State.
- Cover page calculation. When a user intends to submit a report, the only cover page information needed will be the balance brought forward (line 1).
  After entering this figure, the user clicks a button and the remaining cover page line item totals are automatically calculated.
- Pre-audit checks. At any time prior to or at submission of a report, a user can click a button to have the system “audit” that report's entries. Items such as missing employer information or the receipt of a cash contribution exceeding $100 are part of this “audit” function.
- Easy to read printed version. A user can create and print the contents of any report - whether submitted or pending - in order to review the entries.

Email- The Email Submission Method is more complicated than filing Online and was designed primarily for large committees or those that are using commercial campaign software to track contribution and expenditure activity. This method involves putting the report into a prescribed comma-delimited text file format and sending it as an email attachment to the Secretary of State's office. The Secretary of State's office has developed an Excel template to assist filers with this process. A copy of the template is available from the Secretary of State's office upon request.

Please be aware that the campaign finance forms available in Excel or PDF are available to facilitate paper filing and are not to be used to file reports electronically.

All committees wanting to file electronically must first register by submitting an Electronic Filing Registration Form (Form 30-D-1). A copy of the form is available from the Secretary of State's website. Please mail the completed form to:

Ohio Secretary of State
Campaign Finance
180 Civic Center Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Login credentials necessary for your committee to file electronically will then be sent to the committee.

Penalty. Whoever fails to comply with section 3517.106 of the Revised Code is subject to a fine of up to $1,000. R.C. 3517.99.

The information provided in this document is not intended to be a complete description of all the campaign finance filing requirements for statewide, general assembly, and court of appeals candidates.

Please contact the campaign finance section of the Secretary of State's office at 614-466-3111 or log on to *OhioSoS.gov* for more information about electronic filing or filing requirements.