

§1019-B. Reports of independent expenditures

1. Independent expenditures; definition. For the purposes of this section, an "independent expenditure" means any expenditure made by a person, party committee or political action committee that is not made in cooperation, consultation or concert with, or at the request or suggestion of, a candidate, a candidate's authorized political committee or an agent of either and that:

A. Is made to design, produce or disseminate any communication that expressly advocates the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate; or [PL 2021, c. 132, §7 (AMD).]

B. Unless the person, party committee or political action committee making the expenditure demonstrates under subsection 2 that the expenditure did not have a purpose or effect of influencing the nomination, election or defeat of the candidate, is made to design, produce or disseminate a communication that names or depicts a clearly identified candidate and is disseminated during the 28 days, including election day, before a primary election; during the 35 days, including election day, before a special election; or from Labor Day to a general election day. [PL 2023, c. 324, §10 (AMD).]

[PL 2023, c. 324, §10 (AMD).]

2. Commission determination. A person, party committee or political action committee may request a determination that an expenditure that otherwise meets the definition of an independent expenditure under subsection 1, paragraph B is not an independent expenditure by filing a signed written statement with the commission within 7 days of disseminating the communication stating that the cost was not incurred with a purpose of influencing the nomination, election or defeat of a candidate, supported by any additional evidence the person, party committee or political action committee chooses to submit. The commission may gather any additional evidence it determines relevant and material. The commission shall determine by a preponderance of the evidence whether the cost was incurred with a purpose of, or had the effect of, influencing the nomination, election or defeat of a candidate. In order to make this determination, the commission shall consider whether the language and other elements of the communication would lead a reasonable person to conclude that the communication had a purpose of, or had the effect of, influencing an election. The commission may consider other factors, including, but not limited to, the timing of the communication, the recipients of the communication or, if the communication is a digital communication, any links to publicly accessible websites related to the nomination, election or defeat of a candidate. The commission's executive director shall make an initial determination on the request, which must be posted on the commission's publicly accessible website. Any person may appeal the initial determination, which must be considered by the commission at the next public meeting that is feasible.

[PL 2023, c. 324, §11 (AMD).]

3. Report required; content; rules.

[PL 2009, c. 524, §6 (RPR); MRSA T. 21-A §1019-B, sub-§3 (RP).]

4. Report required; content; rules. A person, party committee or political action committee that makes any independent expenditure in excess of \$250 during any one candidate's election shall file a report with the commission. In the case of a municipal election, the report must be filed with the municipal clerk.

A. A report required by this subsection must be filed with the commission according to a reporting schedule that the commission shall establish by rule that takes into consideration existing campaign finance reporting requirements. Rules adopted pursuant to this paragraph are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [PL 2011, c. 558, §2 (AMD).]

B. A report required by this subsection must contain an itemized account of each expenditure in excess of \$250 in any one candidate's election, the date and purpose of each expenditure and the name of each payee or creditor. The report must state whether the expenditure is in support of or

in opposition to the candidate and must include, under penalty of unsworn falsification, as provided in Title 17-A, section 453, a statement whether the expenditure is made in cooperation, consultation or concert with, or at the request or suggestion of, the candidate or an authorized committee or agent of the candidate. [PL 2023, c. 324, §12 (AMD).]

C. A report required by this subsection must be on a form prescribed and prepared by the commission. A person filing this report may use additional pages if necessary, but the pages must be the same size as the pages of the form. The commission may adopt procedures requiring the electronic filing of an independent expenditure report, as long as the commission adopts an exception for persons who lack access to the required technology or the technological ability to file reports electronically. [PL 2023, c. 324, §13 (AMD).]

[PL 2023, c. 324, §§12, 13 (AMD).]

5. Exclusions. An independent expenditure does not include:

A. [PL 2021, c. 132, §9 (RP).]

B. A telephone survey that meets generally accepted standards for polling research and that is not conducted for the purpose of changing the voting position of the call recipients or discouraging them from voting; [PL 2011, c. 389, §21 (NEW).]

C. A telephone call naming a clearly identified candidate that identifies an individual's position on a candidate, ballot question or political party for the purpose of encouraging the individual to vote, as long as the call contains no advocacy for or against any candidate; and [PL 2011, c. 389, §21 (NEW).]

D. A voter guide that consists primarily of candidates' responses to surveys and questionnaires and that contains no advocacy for or against any candidate. [PL 2011, c. 389, §21 (NEW).]

[PL 2021, c. 132, §9 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 448, §3 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 443, Pt. A, §20 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 366, §5 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 366, §12 (AFF). PL 2009, c. 524, §§6, 7 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 389, §§20, 21 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 389, §62 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 558, §2 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 334, §§15, 16 (AMD). IB 2015, c. 1, §§5, 6 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 350, §6 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 323, §§15-17 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 132, §§7-9 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 324, §§10-13 (AMD).

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