

**Sixty-eighth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota  
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 3, 2023**

HOUSE BILL NO. 1257

(Representatives Conmy, Dyk, Hanson, Heinert, Murphy, Schneider, Schreiber-Beck, Swiontek)  
(Senators Beard, Braunberger)

AN ACT to amend and reenact sections 15.1-09-08, 16.1-08.1-02.3, and 16.1-08.1-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to campaign contribution statements for candidates seeking a school district office.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

**SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 15.1-09-08 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**15.1-09-08. School district elections - Candidate filings.**

An individual seeking election to the board of a school district shall prepare and sign a document stating the individual's name and the position for which that individual is a candidate. A candidate shall also file a statement of interests as required by section 16.1-09-02. Whether or not the election is held in conjunction with a statewide election, ~~these documents~~ all statements of interest must be filed with the school district business manager, or mailed to and in the possession of the business manager, by four p.m. of the sixty-fourth day before the election. A candidate shall also file a campaign contribution statement as required by section 16.1-08.1-02.3.

**SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-08.1-02.3 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-08.1-02.3. Pre-election, supplemental, and year-end campaign disclosure statement requirements for candidates, candidate committees, multicandidate committees, and nonstatewide political parties.**

1. Prior to the thirty-first day before a primary, general, or special election, a candidate or candidate committee formed on behalf of the candidate, a multicandidate political committee, or a political party other than a statewide political party soliciting or accepting contributions shall file a campaign disclosure statement that includes all contributions received from January first through the fortieth day before the election. A candidate whose name is not on the ballot and who is not seeking election through write-in votes, the candidate's candidate committee, and a political party that has not endorsed or nominated any candidate in the election is not required to file a statement under this subsection. The statement may be submitted for filing beginning on the thirty-ninth day before the election. The statement must include:
  - a. For each aggregated contribution from a contributor which totals in excess of two hundred dollars received during the reporting period:
    - (1) The name and mailing address of the contributor;
    - (2) The total amount of the contribution; and
    - (3) The date the last contributed amount was received;
  - b. The total of all aggregated contributions from contributors which total in excess of two hundred dollars during the reporting period;

- c. The total of all contributions received from contributors that contributed two hundred dollars or less each during the reporting period; and
  - d. For a statewide candidate, a candidate committee formed on behalf of a statewide candidate, and a statewide multicandidate committee, the balance of the campaign fund on the fortieth day before the election and the balance of the campaign fund on January first.
2. Beginning on the thirty-ninth day before the election through the day before the election, a person that files a statement under subsection 1 must file a supplemental statement within forty-eight hours of the start of the day following the receipt of a contribution or aggregate contribution from a contributor which is in excess of five hundred dollars. The statement must include:
  - a. The name and mailing address of the contributor;
  - b. The total amount of the contribution received during the reporting period; and
  - c. The date the last contributed amount was received.
3. Prior to February first, a candidate or candidate committee, a multicandidate political committee, or a nonstatewide political party soliciting or accepting contributions shall file a campaign disclosure statement that includes all contributions received and expenditures, by expenditure category, made from January first through December thirty-first of the previous year. The statement may be submitted for filing beginning on January first. The statement must include:
  - a. For a statewide candidate, a candidate committee formed on behalf of a statewide candidate, and a statewide multicandidate committee, the balance of the campaign fund on January first and on December thirty-first;
  - b. For each aggregated contribution from a contributor which totals in excess of two hundred dollars received during the reporting period:
    - (1) The name and mailing address of the contributor;
    - (2) The total amount of the contribution; and
    - (3) The date the last contributed amount was received;
  - c. The total of all aggregated contributions from contributors which total in excess of two hundred dollars during the reporting period;
  - d. The total of all contributions received from contributors that contributed two hundred dollars or less each during the reporting period; and
  - e. The total of all other expenditures made during the previous year, separated into expenditure categories.
4. A person required to file a statement under this section, other than a candidate for judicial office, county office, ~~or~~ city office, or school district office, or a candidate committee for a candidate exempted under this subsection, shall report each aggregated contribution from a contributor which totals five thousand dollars or more during the reporting period. For these contributions from individuals, the statement must include the contributor's occupation, employer, and the employer's principal place of business.
5. A candidate for city office in a city with a population under five thousand and a candidate committee for the candidate are exempt from this section. A candidate for school district office

in a school district with a fall enrollment of fewer than one thousand students and a candidate committee for the candidate are exempt from this section.

6. A candidate for county office and a candidate committee for a candidate for county office shall file statements under this chapter with the county auditor. A candidate for city office who is required to file a statement under this chapter and a candidate committee for such a candidate shall file statements with the city auditor. A candidate for school district office who is required to file a statement under this chapter and a candidate committee for such a candidate shall file statements with the school district business manager. Any other person required to file a statement under this section shall file the statement with the secretary of state.
7. The filing officer shall assess and collect fees for any reports filed after the filing deadline.
8. To ensure accurate reporting and avoid commingling of campaign and personal funds, candidates shall use dedicated campaign accounts that are separate from any personal accounts.

**SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-08.1-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-08.1-05. Audit by secretary of state - Requested audits - Reports.**

1. If a substantial irregularity is evident or reasonably alleged, the secretary of state may arrange an audit of any statement filed pursuant to this chapter, to be performed by a certified public accountant of the filer's choice, subject to approval by the secretary of state. If an audit of a statement arranged by the secretary of state under this subsection reveals a violation of this chapter, the candidate, political party, political committee, or other person filing the statement shall pay a fine to the secretary of state equal to two hundred percent of the aggregate of contributions and expenditures found to be in violation or an amount sufficient to pay the cost of the audit, whichever is greater. If an audit of a statement arranged by the secretary of state under this subsection does not reveal a violation of this chapter, the cost of the audit must be paid for by the secretary of state.
2. If a substantial irregularity is reasonably alleged, the secretary of state may arrange an audit of any statement filed pursuant to this chapter, performed by a certified public accountant of the filer's choice, subject to approval by the secretary of state, upon written request by any interested party made to the secretary of state within thirty days following receipt of a statement by the secretary of state. The request must be made in writing, recite a substantial irregularity and a lawful reason for requesting an audit, and be accompanied by a bond in an amount established by the secretary of state sufficient to pay the cost of the audit. If an audit of a statement arranged by the secretary of state under this subsection reveals a violation of this chapter, the candidate, political party, or political committee filing the statement shall pay a fine to the secretary of state equal to two hundred percent of the aggregate of contributions and expenditures found to be in violation or an amount sufficient to pay the cost of the audit, whichever is greater, and the bond shall be returned to the person submitting it. If an audit of a statement arranged by the secretary of state under this subsection does not reveal a violation of this chapter, the cost of the audit must be satisfied from the bond filed with the secretary of state.
3. An audit may not be made or requested of a statement for the sole reason that it was not timely filed with the secretary of state. An audit made or arranged according to this section must audit only those items required to be included in any statement, registration, or report filed with the secretary of state according to this chapter. The secretary of state may collect any payment obligation arising out of this section by civil action or by assignment to a collection agency, with any costs of collection to be added to the amount owed and to be paid by the delinquent filer. Any remaining moneys collected by the secretary of state after an audit is paid for under this section must be deposited in the state's general fund. This section does

not apply to statements filed by candidates or candidate committees for candidates for county or city, or school district offices.

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Speaker of the House

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President of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk of the House

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Secretary of the Senate

This certifies that the within bill originated in the House of Representatives of the Sixty-eighth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as House Bill No. 1257.

House Vote:    Yeas 88            Nays 3            Absent 3

Senate Vote:    Yeas 44            Nays 0            Absent 3

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Chief Clerk of the House

Received by the Governor at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

Approved at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

Filed in this office this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023,

at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

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Secretary of State