

## Article 22A.

### Regulating Contributions and Expenditures in Political Campaigns.

#### Part 1. In General.

##### **§ 163-278.5. Scope of Article; severability.**

The provisions of this Article apply to primaries and elections for North Carolina offices and to North Carolina referenda and do not apply to primaries and elections for federal offices or offices in other States or to non-North Carolina referenda. Any provision in this Article that regulates a non-North Carolina entity does so only to the extent that the entity's actions affect elections for North Carolina offices or North Carolina referenda.

The provisions of this Article are severable. If any provision is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity does not affect other provisions of the Article that can be given effect without the invalid provision.

This section applies to Articles and [Article] 22M of the General Statutes to the same extent that it applies to this Article. (1999-31, s. 6(a); 2000-140, s. 82; 2005-430, s. 7; 2007-349, s. 5; 2009-534, s. 6; 2013-360, s. 21.1(d); 2013-381, ss. 38.1(g), 48.2; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

##### **§ 163-278.6. Definitions.**

When used in this Article:

- (1) The term "affiliated party committee" means a General Assembly affiliated party committee as established by G.S. 163-278.8B or Council of State affiliated party committee as established by G.S. 163-278.8C.
- (3) The term "board" means the State Board of Elections with respect to all candidates for State, legislative, and judicial offices and the county board of elections with respect to all candidates for county and municipal offices. The term means the State Board of Elections with respect to all statewide referenda and the county board of elections conducting all local referenda.
- (5) The term "broadcasting station" means any commercial radio or television station or community antenna radio or television station. Special definitions of "radio" and "television" that apply only in Part 1A of this Article are set forth in G.S. 163-278.38Z.
- (7) The term "business entity" means any partnership, joint venture, joint-stock company, company, firm, or any commercial or industrial establishment or enterprise.
- (9) The term "candidate" means any individual who, with respect to a public office listed in G.S. 163-278.6(80), has taken positive action for the purpose of bringing about that individual's nomination, retention, or election to public office. Examples of positive action include any of the following:
  - a. Filing a notice of candidacy, filing a notice to be retained, or a petition requesting to be a candidate.
  - b. Being certified as a nominee of a political party for a vacancy.
  - c. Otherwise qualifying as a candidate in a manner authorized by law.
  - d. Making a public announcement of a definite intent to run for public office in a particular election.
  - e. Receiving funds or making payments or giving the consent for anyone else to receive funds or transfer anything of value for the purpose of

bringing about that individual's nomination or election to office. Transferring anything of value includes incurring an obligation to transfer anything of value.

Status as a candidate for the purpose of this Article continues if the individual is receiving contributions to repay loans or cover a deficit or is making expenditures to satisfy obligations from an election already held. Special definitions of "candidate" and "candidate campaign committee" that apply only in Part 1A of this Article are set forth in G.S. 163-278.38Z.

- (11) The term "communications media" or "media" means broadcasting stations, carrier current stations, newspapers, magazines, periodicals, outdoor advertising facilities, billboards, newspaper inserts, and any person or individual whose business is polling public opinion, analyzing or predicting voter behavior or voter preferences. Special definitions of "print media," "radio," and "television" that apply only in Part 1A of this Article are set forth in G.S. 163-278.38Z.
- (13) The terms "contribute" or "contribution" mean any advance, conveyance, deposit, distribution, transfer of funds, loan, payment, gift, pledge or subscription of money or anything of value whatsoever, made to, or in coordination with, a candidate to support or oppose the nomination or election of one or more clearly identified candidates, to a political committee, to a political party, to an affiliated party committee, or to a referendum committee, whether or not made in an election year, and any contract, agreement, or other obligation to make a contribution. An expenditure forgiven by a person or entity to whom it is owed shall be reported as a contribution from that person or entity. These terms include, without limitation, such contributions as labor or personal services, postage, publication of campaign literature or materials, in-kind transfers, loans or use of any supplies, office machinery, vehicles, aircraft, office space, or similar or related services, goods, or personal or real property. These terms also include, without limitation, the proceeds of sale of services, campaign literature and materials, wearing apparel, tickets or admission prices to campaign events such as rallies or dinners, and the proceeds of sale of any campaign-related services or goods. Notwithstanding the foregoing meanings of "contribution," the word shall not be construed to include services provided without compensation by individuals volunteering a portion or all of their time on behalf of a candidate, political committee, or referendum committee. The term "contribution" does not include an "independent expenditure." If:
  - a. Any individual, person, committee, association, or any other organization or group of individuals, including but not limited to, a political organization (as defined in section 527(e)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) makes, or contracts to make, any disbursement for any electioneering communication, as defined in this section; and
  - b. That disbursement is coordinated with a candidate, an authorized political committee of that candidate, a State or local political party or committee of that party, an affiliated party committee, or an agent or official of any such candidate, party, or committee

that disbursement or contracting shall be treated as a contribution to the candidate supported by the electioneering communication or that candidate's party and as an expenditure by that candidate or that candidate's party.

(14) – (19) [Reserved.]

(20) The term "coordinated expenditure" means an expenditure that is made in concert or cooperation with, or at the request or suggestion of, a candidate, a candidate campaign committee as defined in G.S. 163-278.38Z(3), the agent of the candidate, or the agent of the candidate campaign committee. An expenditure for the distribution of information relating to a candidate's campaign, positions, or policies, that is obtained through publicly available resources, including a candidate campaign committee, is not a coordinated expenditure if it is not made in concert or cooperation with, or at the request or suggestion of, a candidate, the candidate campaign committee, the agent of the candidate, or the agent of the candidate campaign committee.

(22) The term "coordination" means in concert or cooperation with, or at the request or suggestion of.

(24) The term "corporation" means any corporation established under either domestic or foreign charter, and includes a corporate subsidiary and any business entity in which a corporation participates or is a stockholder, a partner or a joint venturer. The term applies regardless of whether the corporation does business in the State of North Carolina.

(26) The term "costs of collection" means monies spent by the State Board of Elections in the collection of the penalties levied under this Article to the extent the costs do not constitute more than fifty percent (50%) of the civil penalty. The costs are presumed to be ten percent (10%) of the civil penalty unless otherwise determined by the State Board of Elections based on the records of expenses incurred by the State Board of Elections for its collection procedures.

(28) The term "day" means calendar day.

(30) The term "election" means any general or special election, a first or second primary, a run-off election, or an election to fill a vacancy. The term "election" shall not include any local or statewide referendum.

(32) The term "election cycle" means the period of time from January 1 after an election for an office through December 31 after the election for the next term of the same office. Where the term is applied in the context of several offices with different terms, "election cycle" means the period from January 1 of an odd-numbered year through December 31 of the next even-numbered year.

(33) – (40) [Reserved.]

(41) The term "electioneering communication" means any broadcast, cable, or satellite communication, or mass mailing, or telephone bank that has all the following characteristics:

- a. Refers to a clearly identified candidate for elected office.
- b. In the case of the general election in November of the even-numbered year is aired or transmitted within 30 days of the election for that office.
- c. May be received by either:
  1. 50,000 or more individuals in the State in an election for statewide office or 7,500 or more individuals in any other

election if in the form of broadcast, cable, or satellite communication.

2. 20,000 or more households, cumulative per election, in a statewide election or 2,500 households, cumulative per election, in any other election if in the form of mass mailing or telephone bank.

(43) The term "electioneering communication" does not include any of the following:

- a. A communication appearing in a news story, commentary, or editorial distributed through the facilities of any broadcasting station, unless those facilities are owned or controlled by any political party, affiliated party committee, political committee, or candidate.
- b. A communication that constitutes an expenditure or independent expenditure under this Article.
- c. A communication that constitutes a candidate debate or forum conducted pursuant to rules adopted by the Board or that solely promotes that debate or forum and is made by or on behalf of the person sponsoring the debate or forum.
- d. A communication made while the General Assembly is in session which, incidental to advocacy for or against a specific piece of legislation pending before the General Assembly, urges the audience to communicate with a member or members of the General Assembly concerning that piece of legislation or a solicitation of others as defined in G.S. 120C-100(a)(36) properly reported under Chapter 120C of the General Statutes.
- e. A communication that meets all of the following criteria:
  1. Does not mention any election, candidacy, political party, opposing candidate, or voting by the general public.
  2. Does not take a position on the candidate's character or qualifications and fitness for office.
  3. Proposes a commercial transaction.
- f. A public opinion poll conducted by a news medium, as defined in G.S. 8-53.11(a)(3), conducted by an organization whose primary purpose is to conduct or publish public opinion polls, or contracted for by a person to be conducted by an organization whose primary purpose is to conduct or publish public opinion polls. This sub-subdivision shall not apply to a push poll. For the purpose of this sub-subdivision, "push poll" shall mean the political campaign technique in which an individual or organization attempts to influence or alter the view of respondents under the guise of conducting a public opinion poll.
- g. A communication made by a news medium, as defined in G.S. 8-53.11(a)(3), if the communication is in print.

(45) – (48) [Reserved.]

(49) The term "enforcement costs" means salaries, overhead, and other monies spent by the State Board of Elections in the enforcement of the penalties provisions of this Article, including the costs of investigators, attorneys, travel costs for State

Board employees and its attorneys, to the extent the costs do not constitute more than fifty percent (50%) of the sum levied for the enforcement costs and civil late penalty.

- (51) The terms "expend" or "expenditure" mean any purchase, advance, conveyance, deposit, distribution, transfer of funds, loan, payment, gift, pledge or subscription of money or anything of value whatsoever, whether or not made in an election year, and any contract, agreement, or other obligation to make an expenditure, to support or oppose the nomination, election, or passage of one or more clearly identified candidates, or ballot measure. An expenditure forgiven by a person or entity to whom it is owed shall be reported as a contribution from that person or entity. Supporting or opposing the election of clearly identified candidates includes supporting or opposing the candidates of a clearly identified political party. The term "expenditure" also includes any payment or other transfer made by a candidate, political committee, or referendum committee.
- (53) The term "independently expend" or "independent expenditure" means an expenditure to support or oppose the nomination or election of one or more clearly identified candidates that is not a coordinated expenditure. Supporting or opposing the election of clearly identified candidates includes supporting or opposing the candidates of a clearly identified political party. A contribution is not an independent expenditure. As applied to referenda, the term "independent expenditure" applies if consultation or coordination does not take place with a referendum committee that supports a ballot measure the expenditure supports, or a referendum committee that opposes the ballot measure the expenditure opposes.
- (55) The term "individual" means a single individual or more than one individual.
- (57) The term "insurance company" means any person whose business is making or underwriting contracts of insurance, and includes mutual insurance companies, stock insurance companies, and fraternal beneficiary associations.
- (59) The term "labor union" means any union, organization, combination or association of employees or workmen formed for the purposes of securing by united action favorable wages, improved labor conditions, better hours of labor or work-related benefits, or for handling, processing or righting grievances by employees against their employers, or for representing employees collectively or individually in dealings with their employers. The term includes any unions to which Article 10, Chapter 95 applies.
- (60) – (69) [Reserved.]
- (70) The term "mass mailing" means any mailing by United States mail or facsimile to 20,000 or more households, cumulative per election, in a statewide election or 2,500 households, cumulative per election, in any other election.
- (72) The term "person" means any business entity, corporation, insurance company, labor union, or professional association.
- (74) The term "political committee" means a combination of two or more individuals, such as any person, committee, association, organization, or other entity that makes, or accepts anything of value to make, contributions or expenditures and has one or more of the following characteristics:

- a. Is controlled by a candidate.
- b. Is a political party or executive committee of a political party or is controlled by a political party or executive committee of a political party.
- c. Is created by a corporation, business entity, insurance company, labor union, or professional association pursuant to G.S. 163-278.19(d) G.S. 163-278.19(b).
- d. Has the major purpose to support or oppose the nomination or election of one or more clearly identified candidates.
- e. Is an affiliated party committee.

Supporting or opposing the election of clearly identified candidates includes supporting or opposing the candidates of a clearly identified political party.

If the entity qualifies as a "political committee" under sub-subdivision a., b., c., or d. of this subdivision, it continues to be a political committee if it receives contributions or makes expenditures or maintains assets or liabilities. A political committee ceases to exist when it winds up its operations, disposes of its assets, and files its final report.

The term "political committee" includes the campaign of a candidate who serves as his or her own treasurer.

The term "political committee" does not include a federal political committee that is registered with and reports to the Federal Election Commission or other federal political organization that files Internal Revenue Service Form 8871 and Form 8872.

Special definitions of "political action committee" and "candidate campaign committee" that apply only in Part 1A of this Article are set forth in G.S. 163-278.38Z.

- (76) The term "political party" means any political party organized or operating in this State, whether or not that party is recognized under the provisions of G.S. 163-96. A special definition of "political party organization" that applies only in Part 1A of this Article is set forth in G.S. 163-278.38Z. An affiliated party committee is deemed a political party for this Article as set forth in G.S. 163-278.8B and G.S. 163-278.8C.
- (78) The term "professional association" means any trade association, group, organization, association, or collection of persons or individuals formed for the purposes of advancing, representing, improving, furthering or preserving the interests of persons or individuals having a common vocation, profession, calling, occupation, employment, or training.
- (80) The term "public office" means any office filled by election by the people on a statewide, county, municipal or district basis, and this Article shall be applicable to such elective offices whether the election therefor is partisan or nonpartisan.
- (82) The term "referendum" means any question, issue, or act referred to a vote of the people of the entire State by the General Assembly, a unit of local government, or by the people under any applicable local act and includes constitutional amendments and State bond issues. The term "referendum"

- includes any type of municipal, county, or special district referendum and any initiative or referendum authorized by a municipal charter or local act. A recall election shall not be considered a referendum within the meaning of this Article.
- (84) The term "referendum committee" means a combination of two or more individuals such as a committee, association, organization, or other entity or a combination of two or more business entities, corporations, insurance companies, labor unions, or professional associations such as a committee, association, organization, or other entity the primary purpose of which is to support or oppose the passage of any referendum on the ballot. If the entity qualifies as a "referendum committee" under this subdivision, it continues to be a referendum committee if it receives contributions or makes expenditures or maintains assets or liabilities. A referendum committee ceases to exist when it winds up its operations, disposes of its assets, and files its final report.
  - (85) – (92) [Reserved.]
  - (93) The term "telephone bank" means telephone calls that are targeted to the relevant electorate, except when those telephone calls are made by volunteer workers, whether or not the design of the telephone bank system, development of calling instructions, or training of volunteers was done by paid professionals.
  - (95) The term "treasurer" means an individual appointed by a candidate, political committee, or referendum committee as provided in G.S. 163-278.7 or G.S. 163-278.40A. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1975, c. 798, ss. 5, 6; 1979, c. 500, s. 1; c. 1073, ss. 1-3, 19, 20; 1981, c. 837, s. 1; 1983, c. 331, s. 6; 1985, c. 352, ss. 1-3; 1997-515, ss. 4(a)-(c), 7(b)-(d); 1999-31, ss. 1(a), (b), 2(a)-(c), 3, 4(a); 1999-424, s. 6(a), (b); 2002-159, s. 55(n); 2003-278, s. 5; 2004-125, s. 3; 2004-127, s. 15; 2004-203, s. 12(b); 2005-430, s. 10; 2006-264, s. 23; 2007-391, s. 3; 2008-150, s. 6(a); 2008-187, s. 33(a); 2009-534, ss. 1, 3(a), (b); 2010-170, s. 1; 2011-31, s. 20; 2013-381, s. 50.1; 2015-66, s. 8(a); 2015-258, s. 3(b), (b1); 2015-264, s. 81(c), (d); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-144, s. 3.4(m); 2018-146, ss. 3.1(a), (b), 4.6; 2024-16, s. 5(a).)

#### **§ 163-278.7. Appointment of political treasurers.**

(a) Each candidate who has received funds or made payments or given consent for anyone else to receive funds or transfer anything of value for the purpose of bringing about that individual's nomination or election for office, political committee, and referendum committee shall appoint a treasurer and, under verification, report the name and address of the treasurer to the Board. Only an individual who resides in North Carolina shall be appointed as a treasurer. A candidate may appoint himself or herself or any other individual, including any relative except his or her spouse, as the candidate's treasurer, and, upon failure to file [a] report designating a treasurer, the candidate shall be concluded to have appointed himself or herself as treasurer and shall be required to personally fulfill the duties and responsibilities imposed upon the appointed treasurer and subject to the penalties and sanctions hereinafter provided.

(b) Each appointed treasurer shall file with the Board at the time required by G.S. 163-278(a)(1) a statement of organization that includes:

- (1) The Name, Address and Purpose of the Candidate, Political Committee, or Referendum Committee. – When the political committee or referendum committee is created pursuant to G.S. 163-278.19(b), the name shall be or

include the name of the corporation, insurance company, business entity, labor union or professional association whose officials, employees, or members established the committee. When the political committee or referendum committee is not created pursuant to G.S. 163-278.19(b), the name shall be or include the economic interest, if identifiable, principally represented by the committee's organizers or intended to be advanced by use of the committee's receipts;

- (2) The names, addresses, and relationships of affiliated or connected candidates, political committees, referendum committees, political parties, affiliated party committees, or similar organizations;
  - (3) The territorial area, scope, or jurisdiction of the candidate, political committee, or referendum committee;
  - (4) The name, address, and position with the candidate or political committee of the custodian of books and accounts;
  - (5) The name and party affiliation of the candidate(s) whom the committee is supporting or opposing, and the office(s) involved;
  - (6) The name of the referendum(s) which the referendum committee is supporting or opposing, and whether the committee is supporting or opposing the referendum;
  - (7) The name of the political committee, political party or affiliated party committee being supported or opposed if the committee is supporting the ticket of a particular candidate or political party;
  - (8) A listing of all banks, safety deposit boxes, or other depositories used, including the names and numbers of all accounts maintained and the numbers of all such safety deposit boxes used, provided that the Board shall keep any account number included in any report filed after March 1, 2003, and required by this Article confidential except as necessary to conduct an audit or investigation, except as required by a court of competent jurisdiction, or unless confidentiality is waived by the treasurer. Disclosure of an account number in violation of this subdivision shall not give rise to a civil cause of action. This limitation of liability does not apply to the disclosure of account numbers in violation of this subdivision as a result of gross negligence, wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing that would otherwise be actionable;
  - (9) The name or names and address or addresses of any assistant treasurers appointed by the treasurer. Such assistant treasurers shall be authorized to act in the name of the candidate, political committee, or referendum committee and shall be fully responsible for any act or acts committed by the assistant treasurer. The treasurer shall be fully liable for any violation of this Article committed by any assistant treasurer; and
  - (10) Any other information which might be requested by the Board that deals with the campaign organization of the candidate or referendum committee.
- (c) Any change in information previously submitted in a statement of organization shall be reported to the Board within a 10-day period following the change.
- (d) A candidate, political committee or referendum committee may remove his or its treasurer. In case of the death, resignation or removal of his or its treasurer before compliance with all obligations of a treasurer under this Article, such candidate, political committee or referendum



committee shall appoint a successor within 10 days of the vacancy of such office, and certify the name and address of the successor in the manner provided in the case of an original appointment.

(e) Every treasurer of a referendum committee shall receive, prior to every election in which the referendum committee is involved, training from the State Board of Elections as to the duties of the office, including the requirements of G.S. 163-278.13(i), provided that the treasurer may designate an employee or volunteer of the committee to receive the training.

(f) Every treasurer of a political committee shall participate in training as to the duties of the office within three months of appointment and at least once every four years thereafter. The State Board of Elections shall provide the training as to the duties of the office in person, through regional seminars, and through interactive electronic means. The treasurer may designate an assistant treasurer to participate in the training, if one is named under subdivision (b)(9) of this section. The treasurer may choose to participate in training prior to each election in which the political committee is involved. All such training shall be free of charge to the treasurer and assistant treasurer. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1979, c. 500, s. 2; c. 1073, ss. 4, 5, 16, 18, 20; 1987, c. 113, s. 1; 1995, c. 315, s. 1; 2002-159, s. 57.1(a); 2004-203, s. 59(a); 2005-430, s. 10.1; 2006-195, s. 7; 2009-534, s. 4; 2015-258, s. 3(c); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-13, s. 3.10; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

#### **§ 163-278.7A. Gifts from federal political committees and organizations.**

(a) Except as limited or otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, it shall be permissible for a federal political committee organized pursuant to the Federal Election Campaign Act and its regulations to make contributions to a North Carolina candidate or political committee in accordance with the applicable limits specified in G.S. 163-278.13(a).

(b) No federal political committee or other political organization, as defined in section 527(e)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and subject to the disclosure requirements of section 527(j) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, may contribute to North Carolina candidates or political committees if it accepts contributions from sources prohibited from contributing under G.S. 163-278.19; provided, however, that any such committee or organization that also accepts and maintains in one or more segregated accounts contributions from sources not prohibited by G.S. 163-278.19, whether or not limited in amount, may contribute to any national, State, district, or county executive committee of any political party or an affiliated party committee exclusively from such segregated account(s) containing funds from sources not prohibited by G.S. 163-278.19.

(c) Any federal political committee or other political organization making any contribution pursuant to this section shall do all of the following:

- (1) Comply with applicable reporting, operating, contribution, and other requirements and limits of federal law.
- (2) Within 10 calendar days of making a permitted contribution, file with the State Board a copy of its then-effective Statement of Organization filed with the Federal Election Commission or Internal Revenue Service Form 8871, as applicable, unless previously filed.
- (3) For any federal filing period during which the contributing committee or organization makes a permitted contribution, submit to the State Board a copy of its regularly required report filed with the Federal Election Commission or Internal Revenue Service Form 8872 within 10 calendar days of such filing. (1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 593, s. 1; 2003-274, s. 1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b); 2024-16, s. 5(b).)

**§ 163-278.8. Detailed accounts to be kept by political treasurers.**

(a) The treasurer of each candidate, political committee, and referendum committee shall keep detailed accounts, current within not more than seven days after the date of receiving a contribution or making an expenditure, of all contributions received and all expenditures made by or on behalf of the candidate, political committee, or referendum committee. The accounts shall include the information required by the State Board of Elections on its forms.

(b) Accounts kept by the treasurer of a candidate, political committee, or referendum committee or the accounts of a treasurer or political committee at any bank or other depository listed under G.S. 163-278.7(b)(7), may be inspected, before or after the election to which the accounts refer, by a member, designee, agent, attorney or employee of the Board who is making an investigation pursuant to G.S. 163-278.22.

(c) All expenditures for media expenses shall be made by a verifiable form of payment. The State Board of Elections shall prescribe methods to ensure an audit trail for every expenditure so that the identity of each payee can be determined. All media expenditures in any amount shall be accounted for and reported individually and separately with specific descriptions to provide a reasonable understanding of the expenditure.

(d) All expenditures for nonmedia expenses (except postage) of more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) shall be made by a verifiable form of payment. The State Board of Elections shall prescribe methods to ensure an audit trail for every expenditure so that the identity of each payee can be determined. All expenditures for nonmedia expenses of fifty dollars (\$50.00) or less may be made by check or by cash payment. All nonmedia expenditures of more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) shall be accounted for and reported individually and separately with a specific description to provide a reasonable understanding of the expenditure, but expenditures of fifty dollars (\$50.00) or less may be accounted for and reported in an aggregated amount, but in that case the treasurer shall account for and report that the treasurer made expenditures of fifty dollars (\$50.00) or less each, the amounts, dates, and the purposes for which made. In the case of a nonmedia expenditure required to be accounted for individually and separately with a specific description to provide a reasonable understanding of the expenditure by this subsection, if the expenditure was to an individual, the report shall list the name and address of the individual.

(e) All proceeds from loans shall be recorded separately with a detailed analysis reflecting the amount of the loan, the source, the period, the rate of interest, and the security pledged, if any, and all makers and endorsers.

(f) The treasurer shall maintain all moneys of the political committee in a bank account or bank accounts used exclusively by the political committee and shall not commingle those funds with any other moneys. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1977, c. 635, s. 1; 1979, c. 1073, ss. 16, 20; 1981, c. 814, s. 1; 1985, c. 353, ss. 1, 2; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 744, s. 1; 1999-424, s. 7(m); 2004-125, s. 5(a); 2005-430, ss. 2, 3; 2006-161, ss. 2, 3; 2006-195, s. 4; 2008-150, s. 10(a); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.8A. Campaign sales by political party executive committees.**

(a) Exempt Purchase Price Not Treated as "Contribution." – Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 163-278.6(13), the purchase price of goods or services sold by a political party executive committee or affiliated party committee as provided in subsection (b) of this section shall not be treated as a "contribution" for purposes of account-keeping under G.S. 163-278.8, for purposes of the reporting of contributions under G.S. 163-278.11, or for the purpose of the limit on

contributions under G.S. 163-278.13. The treasurer is not required to obtain, maintain, or report the name or other identifying information of the purchaser of the goods or services, as long as the requirements of subsection (b) of this section are satisfied. However, the proceeds from the sales of those goods and services shall be treated as contributions for other purposes, and expenditures of those proceeds shall be reported as expenditures under this Article.

(b) **Exempt Purchase Price.** – A purchase price for goods or services sold by a political party executive committee or affiliated party committee qualifies for the exemption provided in subsection (a) of this section as long as the sale of the goods or services adheres to a plan that the treasurer has submitted to and that has been approved in writing by the Executive Director of the State Board of Elections. The Executive Director shall approve the treasurer's plan upon and only upon finding that all the following requirements are satisfied:

- (1) That the price to be charged for the goods or services is reasonably close to the market price for the goods or services.
- (2) That the total amount to be raised from sales under all plans by the committee does not exceed twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) per election cycle.
- (3) That no purchaser makes total purchases under the plan that exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00).
- (4) That the treasurer include in the report under G.S. 163-278.11, covering the relevant time period, all of the following:
  - a. A description of the plan.
  - b. The amount raised from sales under the plan.
  - c. The number of purchases made.
- (5) That the treasurer shall include in the appropriate report under G.S. 163-278.11 any in-kind contribution made to the political party in providing the goods or services sold under the plan and that no in-kind contribution accepted as part of the plan violates any provision of this Article.

The Executive Director may require a format for submission of a plan, but that format shall not place undue paperwork burdens upon the treasurer. As used in this subdivision, the term "election cycle" has the same meaning as in G.S. 163-278.6(32). (2008-150, s. 8(a); 2015-258, s. 3(d); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b); 2020-84, s. 1(a).)

#### **§ 163-278.8B. Affiliated party committees.**

(a) Each political party caucus of the North Carolina House of Representatives and the North Carolina Senate may establish one separate affiliated party committee to support the election of candidates who would be eligible to be members of that caucus. No other affiliated party committees shall be authorized pursuant to this section. The affiliated party committee is deemed a political party for purposes of this Article.

(b) An affiliated party committee shall be established only by majority vote of the total membership of the political party caucus. Attached to the organizational report filed in accordance with G.S. 163-9, the affiliated party committee shall provide a report to the State Board of Elections certifying that the political party caucus has organized and taken the appropriate vote to establish an affiliated party committee. The report described in this subsection shall be a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes.

(c) Each affiliated party committee shall:

- (1) Adopt bylaws which shall be in compliance with the provisions of this Article. At a minimum, the bylaws shall include designation of a treasurer.

- (2) Conduct campaigns for candidates who would be eligible to be members of that political party caucus of the North Carolina House of Representatives or North Carolina Senate if elected or reelected or manage daily operations of the affiliated party committee.
  - (3) Establish a bank account.
  - (4) Accept contributions and expend funds.
- (d) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, an affiliated party committee shall be entitled to use the name, abbreviation, and symbol of its respective political party.
- (e) For purposes of this section, "political party" has the same meaning as defined in G.S. 163-96. (2015-258, s. 3(a); 2015-264, s. 81(a); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.8C. Council of State affiliated party committees.**

- (a) Members of the Council of State affiliated with the same political party may establish one separate Council of State affiliated party committee to support the election of candidates who would be eligible to be nominees of that political party for Council of State offices. No other Council of State affiliated party committees shall be authorized pursuant to this section. The Council of State affiliated party committee is deemed a political party for purposes of this Article.
- (b) Each Council of State affiliated party committee shall:
- (1) Adopt bylaws which shall be in compliance with the provisions of this Article. At a minimum, the bylaws shall include designation of a treasurer.
  - (2) Conduct campaigns for candidates for Council of State who are members of the leader's political party or manage daily operations of the Council of State affiliated party committee.
  - (3) Establish a bank account.
  - (4) Accept contributions and expend funds.
- (c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, a Council of State affiliated party committee shall be entitled to use the name, abbreviation, and symbol of the political party of its leader.
- (d) A previously established Council of State affiliated party committee may continue to be maintained in the event that no individual affiliated with that political party is elected to serve on the Council of State in the general election. The Council of State affiliated party committee shall be maintained by the most recently elected members of the Council of State from that political party. Notwithstanding the definition of "leader" in subsection (e) of this section, those members shall designate an individual from that group to serve as leader. When an individual or individuals affiliated with that political party is next elected to the Council of State, that individual or individuals shall assume control of the Council of State affiliated party committee for that political party.
- (e) For purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply:
- (1) Leader. – The highest-ranking individual affiliated with the political party of the Council of State affiliated party committee. For the purposes of this subdivision, the highest-ranking office serving on the Council of State shall be in the following order: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and the offices as set out in Article III, Section 7 of the North Carolina Constitution, as follows: Secretary of State, State Auditor, State Treasurer, Superintendent of Public

Instruction, Attorney General, Commissioner of Agriculture, Commissioner of Labor, and Commissioner of Insurance.

- (2) Political party. – As defined in G.S. 163-96. (2015-258, s. 3(a1); 2015-264, s. 81(b); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.9. Statements filed with Board.**

(a) Except as provided in G.S. 163-278.10A, the treasurer of each candidate and of each political committee shall file with the Board under certification of the treasurer as true and correct to the best of the knowledge of that officer the following reports:

- (1) Organizational Report. – The appointment of the treasurer as required by G.S. 163-278.7(a), the statement of organization required by G.S. 163-278.7(b), and a report of all contributions and expenditures not previously reported shall be filed with the Board no later than the tenth day following the day the candidate files notice of candidacy or the tenth day following the organization of the political committee, whichever occurs first. Any candidate whose campaign is being conducted by a political committee which is handling all contributions and expenditures for his campaign shall file a statement with the Board stating such fact at the time required herein for the organizational report. Thereafter, the candidate's political committee shall be responsible for filing all reports required by law.
- (2) 48-Hour Report. – A political committee, political party or affiliated party committee that receives a contribution or transfer of funds shall disclose within 48 hours of receipt a contribution or transfer of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more received before an election but after the period covered by the last report due before that election. The disclosure shall be by report to the State Board identifying the source and amount of the funds. The State Board shall specify the form and manner of making the report, including the reporting of in-kind contributions.
- (3) Quarterly Reports. – During even-numbered years during which there is an election for that candidate or in which the campaign committee is supporting or opposing a candidate, the treasurer shall file a report by mailing or otherwise delivering it to the Board no later than seven working days after the end of each calendar quarter covering the prior calendar quarter, except that:
  - a. The report for the first quarter shall also cover the period in April through the seventeenth day before the primary, the first quarter report shall be due seven days after that date, and the second quarter report shall not include that period if a first quarter report was required to be filed; and
  - b. The report for the third quarter shall also cover the period in October through the seventeenth day before the election, the third quarter report shall be due seven days after that date, and the fourth quarter report shall not include that period if a third quarter report was required to be filed.
- (4) Semiannual Reports. – If contributions are received or expenditures made for which no reports are otherwise required by this Article, any and all such contributions and expenditures shall be reported by the last Friday in July,

covering the period through the last day of June, and shall be reported by the last Friday in January, covering the period through the last day of December.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in this Article, each report shall be current within seven days prior to the date the report is due and shall list all contributions received and expenditures made which have not been previously reported.

(c) Candidates and committees for municipal offices are not subject to subsections (a) and (b) of this section, unless they make contributions or expenditures concerning elections covered by this Part. Reports for those candidates and committees are covered by Part 2 of this Article.

(d) Notwithstanding subsections (a) through (b) of this section, any political party (including a State, district, county, or precinct committee thereof) which is required to file reports under those subsections and under the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (2 U.S.C. 434), shall instead of filing the reports required by those subsections, file with the State Board of Elections:

(1) The organizational report required by subsection (a)(1) of this section, and

(2) A copy of each report required to be filed under 2 U.S.C. 434, such copy to be filed on the same day as the federal report is required to be filed.

(e) Any report filed under subsection (d) of this section may include matter required by the federal law but not required by this Article.

(f) Any report filed under subsection (d) of this section must contain all the information required by G.S. 163-278.11, notwithstanding that the federal law may set a higher reporting threshold.

(g) Any report filed under subsection (d) of this section may reflect the cumulative totals required by G.S. 163-278.11 in an attachment, if the federal law does not permit such information in the body of the report.

(h) Any report or attachment filed under subsection (d) of this section must be certified.

(i) Treasurers for each of the following entities shall electronically file each report required by this section that shows a cumulative total for the election cycle in excess of the stated amount in contributions, in expenditures, or in loans, according to rules adopted by the State Board of Elections:

(1) A candidate for statewide office, if more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

(2) A State, district, county, or precinct executive committee of a political party, or an affiliated party committee, if the committee makes contributions or independent expenditures in excess of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) that affect contests for statewide office.

(3) A political committee that makes contributions in excess of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to candidates for statewide office or makes independent expenditures in excess of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) that affect contests for statewide office.

(4) All other political committees, if more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

The State Board of Elections shall provide the software necessary to file an electronic report to a treasurer required to file an electronic report at no cost to the treasurer.

(j) All reports under this section must be filed by a treasurer or assistant treasurer who has completed all training as to the duties of the office required by G.S. 163-278.7(f). (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1975, c. 565, s. 1; 1979, c. 500, ss. 3, 16; c. 730; 1981, c. 837, s. 2; 1985, c. 164, ss. 1, 6-6.2; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1028, s. 6; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1032, s. 10A; 1997-515, ss. 1(a), 4(d1), 5(a), 12(a); 1999-31, s. 7(a), (b); 2001-235, s. 2; 2001-419, s. 7; 2001-487, s. 97(b); 2002-159, s.

21(d); 2006-195, ss. 5.1, 8; 2008-150, ss. 9(c), (d), 11(a); 2014-111, s. 18.5(a); 2015-258, s. 3(e); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.9A. Statements filed by referendum committees.**

(a) The treasurer of each referendum committee shall file under verification with the Board the following reports:

- (1) Organizational Report. – The appointment of the treasurer as required by G.S. 163-278.7(a), the statement of organization required by G.S. 163-278.7(b), and a report of all contributions and expenditures shall be filed with the Board no later than the tenth day following the organization of the referendum committee.
- (2) Pre-Referendum Report. – The treasurer shall file a report with the Board no later than the tenth day preceding the referendum.
- (3) 48-Hour Report. – A referendum committee that receives a contribution or transfer of funds shall disclose within 48 hours of receipt a contribution or transfer of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more received before a referendum but after the period covered by the last report due before that referendum. The disclosure shall be by report to the State Board of Elections identifying the source and amount of such funds. The State Board of Elections shall specify the form and manner of making the report, including the reporting of in-kind contributions.
- (4) Final Report. – The treasurer shall file a final report no later than the tenth day after the referendum. If the final report fails to disclose a final accounting of all contributions and expenditures, a supplemental final report shall be filed no later than January 7, after the referendum, and shall be current through December 31 after the referendum.
- (5) Annual Reports. – If contributions are received or expenditures made during a calendar year for which no reports are otherwise required by this Article, any and all such contributions and expenditures shall be reported by January 7 of the following year.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in this Article, each report shall be current within seven days prior to the date the report is due and shall list all contributions received and expenditures made which have not been previously reported. (1979, c. 1073, s. 6; 1997-515, s. 12(b); 2002-159, s. 21(e); 2008-150, s. 11(b); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.10. Procedure for inactive candidate or committee.**

If no contribution is received or expenditure made by or on behalf of a candidate, political committee, or referendum committee during a period described in G.S. 163-278.9, the treasurer shall file with the Board, at the time required by G.S. 163-278.9, a statement to that effect and it shall not be required that any inactive candidate or committee so filing a report of inactivity file any additional reports required by G.S. 163-278.9 so long as the candidate or committee remains inactive. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1979, c. 1073, s. 20; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.10A. Threshold of \$1,000 for financial reports for certain candidates.**

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, a candidate for a county office, municipal office, local school board office, soil and water conservation district board of

supervisors, or sanitary district board shall be exempted from the reports of contributions, loans, and expenditures required in G.S. 163-278.9(a), 163-278.40B, 163-278.40C, 163-278.40D, and 163-278.40E if to further the candidate's campaign that candidate:

- (1) Does not receive more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) in contributions, and
- (2) Does not receive more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) in loans, and
- (3) Does not spend more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

To qualify for the exemption from those reports, the candidate's treasurer shall file a certification that the candidate does not intend to receive in contributions or loans or expend more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) to further the candidate's campaign. The certification shall be filed with the Board at the same time the candidate files the candidate's Organizational Report as required in G.S. 163-278.7, G.S. 163-278.9, and G.S. 163-278.40A. If the candidate's campaign is being conducted by a political committee which is handling all contributions, loans, and expenditures for the candidate's campaign, the treasurer of the political committee shall file a certification of intent to stay within the threshold amount. If the intent to stay within the threshold changes, or if the one-thousand-dollar (\$1,000) threshold is exceeded, the treasurer shall immediately notify the Board and shall be responsible for filing all reports required in G.S. 163-278.9 and 163-278.40B, 163-278.40C, 163-278.40D, and 163-278.40E; provided that any contribution, loan, or expenditure which would have been required to be reported on an earlier report but for this section shall be included on the next report required after the intent changes or the threshold is exceeded.

(b) The exemption from reporting in subsection (a) of this section applies to political party committees and affiliated party committees under the same terms as for candidates, except that the term "to further the candidate's campaign" does not relate to a political party committee's or an affiliated party committee's exemption, and all contributions, expenditures, and loans during an election shall be counted against the threshold amount for a political party committee or an affiliated committee. (1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1028, s. 2; c. 1081, s. 3; 1989, c. 449; c. 770, s. 53; 1997-515, s. 4(e); 2001-235, s. 3; 2009-534, s. 5; 2015-258, s. 3(f); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

#### **§ 163-278.11. Contents of treasurer's statement of receipts and expenditures.**

- (a) Statements filed pursuant to provisions of this Article shall set forth the following:
  - (1) Contributions. – Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, a list of all contributions received by or on behalf of a candidate, political committee, or referendum committee. The statement shall list the name and complete mailing address of each contributor, the amount contributed, the principal occupation of the contributor, and the date such contribution was received. The total sum of all contributions to date shall be plainly exhibited. Forms for required reports shall be prescribed by the Board. As used in this section, "principal occupation of the contributor" means the contributor's:
    - a. Job title or profession; and
    - b. Employer's name or employer's specific field of business activity.The State Board of Elections shall prepare a schedule of specific fields of business activity, adapting or modifying as it deems suitable the business activity classifications of the Internal Revenue Code or other relevant classification schedules. In reporting a contributor's specific field of business activity, the treasurer shall use the classification schedule prepared by the State Board.



- (2) Expenditures. – A list of all expenditures required under G.S. 163-278.8 made by or on behalf of a candidate, political committee, or referendum committee. The statement shall list the name and complete mailing address of each payee, the amount paid, the purpose, and the date such payment was made. The total sum of all expenditures to date shall be plainly exhibited. Forms for required reports shall be prescribed by the Board. In accounting for all expenditures in accordance with G.S. 163-278.8(e) and G.S. 163-278.8(f), the payee shall be the individual or person to whom the candidate, political committee, or referendum committee is obligated to make the expenditure. If the expenditure is to a financial institution for revolving credit or a reimbursement for a payment to a financial institution for revolving credit, the statement shall also include a specific itemization of the goods and services purchased with the revolving credit. If the obligation is for more than one good or service, the statement shall include a specific itemization of the obligation so as to provide a reasonable understanding of the obligation.
- (3) Loans. – Every candidate and treasurer shall attach to the campaign transmittal submitted with each report an addendum listing all proceeds derived from loans for funds used or to be used in this campaign. The addendum shall be in the form as prescribed by the State Board and shall list the amount of the loan, the source, the period, the rate of interest, and the security pledged, if any, and all makers and endorsers.

(b) Threshold for Reporting Identity of Contributor. – A treasurer shall not be required to report the name, address, or principal occupation of any individual who contributes fifty dollars (\$50.00) or less to the treasurer's committee during an election as defined in G.S. 163-278.13. The State Board of Elections shall provide on its reporting forms for the reporting of contributions below that threshold. On those reporting forms, the State Board may require date and amount of contributions below the threshold, but may treat differently for reporting purposes contributions below the threshold that are made in different modes and in different settings.

(c) Statements shall reflect anything of value paid for or contributed by any person or individual, both as a contribution and expenditure. A political party executive committee or affiliated party committee that makes an expenditure that benefits a candidate or group of candidates shall report the expenditure, including the date, amount, and purpose of the expenditure and the name of and office sought by the candidate or candidates on whose behalf the expenditure was made. A candidate who benefits from the expenditure shall report the expenditure or the proportionate share of the expenditure from which the candidate benefitted as an in-kind contribution if the candidate or the candidate's committee has coordinated with the political party executive committee or affiliated party committee concerning the expenditure.

(d) Best Efforts. – When a treasurer shows that best efforts have been used to obtain, maintain, and submit the information required by this Article for the candidate or political committee, any report of that candidate or committee shall be considered in compliance with this Article and shall not be the basis for criminal prosecution or the imposition of civil penalties, other than forfeiture of a contribution improperly accepted under this Article. The State Board of Elections shall promulgate rules that specify what are "best efforts" for purposes of this Article, adapting as it deems suitable the provisions of 11 C.F.R. § 104.7. The rules shall include a provision that if the treasurer, after complying with this Article and the rules, does not know the occupation of the contributor, it shall suffice for the treasurer to report "unable to obtain". (1973, c.

1272, s. 1; 1977, c. 635, s. 2; 1979, c. 1073, s. 20; 1997-515, ss. 2(a), (b), 3(a); 2006-161, s. 4; 2006-195, s. 5; 2007-391, s. 35(a); 2008-187, s. 33(a); 2015-258, s. 3(g); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.12. Special reporting of contributions and independent expenditures.**

(a) Subject to G.S. 163-278.39 and G.S. 163-278.14, individuals and other entities not otherwise prohibited from doing so may make independent expenditures. In the event an individual, person, or other entity making independent expenditures but not otherwise required to report them makes independent expenditures in excess of one hundred dollars (\$100.00), that individual, person, or entity shall file a statement of such independent expenditure with the appropriate board of elections in the manner prescribed by the State Board of Elections.

(b) Any person or entity other than an individual that is permitted to make contributions but is not otherwise required to report them shall report each contribution in excess of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) with the appropriate board of elections in the manner prescribed by the State Board of Elections.

(c) In assuring compliance with subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the State Board of Elections shall require the identification of each person or entity making a donation of more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) to the entity filing the report if the donation was made to further the reported independent expenditure or contribution. If the donor is an individual, the statement shall also contain the principal occupation of the donor. The "principal occupation of the donor" shall mean the same as the "principal occupation of the contributor" in G.S. 163-278.11.

(d) Contributions or independent expenditures required to be reported under this section shall be reported within 30 days after they exceed one hundred dollars (\$100.00) or 10 days before an election the contributions or independent expenditures affect, whichever occurs earlier.

(e) The State Board of Elections shall require subsequent reporting of independent expenditures according to the same schedule required of political committees under G.S. 163-278.9(a). An individual or person that makes an independent expenditure shall disclose by report to the State Board of Elections within 48 hours of incurring an expense of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or more or receiving a donation of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more for making an independent expenditure before an election but after the period covered by the last report due before that election.

(f) For the purposes of subsection (c) of this section, a donation to the person or entity making the independent expenditure is deemed to have been donated to further the independent expenditure if any of subdivisions (1) through (4) of this subsection apply. For purposes of this subsection, the "filer" is the person or entity making the independent expenditure and responsible for filing the report, or an agent of that person or entity. For purposes of this subsection, the "donor" is the person or entity donating to the filer the funds or other thing of value, or an agent of that person or entity.

- (1) The donor designates, requests, or suggests that the donation be used for an independent expenditure or for multiple independent expenditures, and the filer agrees to use the donation for an independent expenditure.
- (2) The filer expressly solicited the donor for a donation for making or paying for an independent expenditure.
- (3) The donor and the filer engaged in substantial written or oral discussion regarding the donor's making, donating, or paying for an independent expenditure.

- (4) The donor or the filer knew or had reason to know of the filer's intent to make independent expenditures with the donation.

A donation shall not be deemed to be made to further an independent expenditure if the donation was a commercial transaction occurring in the ordinary course of business between the donor and the filer unless there is affirmative evidence that the amounts were donated to further an independent expenditure. In determining the amount of a donation that was made to further any particular independent expenditure, there shall be excluded any amount that was designated by the donor with respect to a different election than the election that is the subject of the independent expenditure covered by the report.

Subdivisions (1) through (4) of this subsection shall also apply to reports made under subsection (c) of this section concerning contributions. However, nothing in this section shall be interpreted to limit the effect of the prohibition on making contributions in the name of another in G.S. 163-278.14.

(g) All reports required by this section shall be filed according to rules adopted by the State Board. If the expense incurred is greater than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), the report shall be filed electronically. The State Board of Elections shall provide the software necessary to file the electronic report to any individual or person required to file an electronic report at no cost to that individual or person. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1979, c. 107, s. 15; c. 1073, s. 20; 1999-31, s. 2(d); 2004-127, s. 16; 2010-170, s. 2; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.12A. Repealed by Session Laws 2004-125, s. 4, effective July 20, 2004.**

**§ 163-278.12B. Reserved for future codification purposes.**

**§ 163-278.12C. Special reporting of electioneering communications.**

(a) Every individual or person that incurs an expense for the direct costs of producing or airing electioneering communications aggregating in excess of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) shall file the following reports with the appropriate board of elections in the manner prescribed by the State Board of Elections:

- (1) The identification of the individual or person incurring the expense, of any individual or person sharing or exercising direction or control over the activities of that individual or person, and of the custodian of the books and accounts of the individual or person incurring the expense.
- (2) The principal place of business of the person incurring the expense, if not an individual.
- (3) The amount of each expense incurred during the period covered by the statement and the identification of the individual or person to whom the expense was incurred.
- (4) The elections to which the electioneering communications pertain, if any, and the names, if known, of the candidates identified or to be identified.
- (5) The names and addresses of all entities that donated, to further an electioneering communication or electioneering communications, funds or anything of value whatsoever in an aggregate amount of more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) during the reporting period. If the donor is an individual, the statement shall also contain the principal occupation of the donor. The "principal occupation of the

donor" shall mean the same as the "principal occupation of the contributor" in G.S. 163-278.11.

(b) The initial report shall be filed with the State Board no later than the 10th day following the day the individual or person incurs an expense for the direct costs of producing or airing an electioneering communication. The State Board shall require subsequent reporting according to the same schedule required of political committees under G.S. 163-278.9(a). An individual or person that produces or airs an electioneering communication shall disclose by report to the State Board within 48 hours of incurring an expense of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or more or receiving a donation of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more for making an electioneering communication before an election but after the period covered by the last report due before that election.

(c) For the purposes of subdivision (a)(5) of this section, a donation to the person or entity making the electioneering communication is deemed to have been donated to further the electioneering communication if any of subdivisions (1) through (4) of this subsection apply. For purposes of this subsection, the "filer" is the person or entity making the electioneering communication and responsible for filing the report, or an agent of that person or entity. For purposes of this subsection, the "donor" is the person or entity donating to the filer the funds or other thing of value, or an agent of that person or entity.

- (1) The donor designates, requests, or suggests that the donation be used for an electioneering communication or electioneering communications, and the filer agrees to use the donation for that purpose.
- (2) The filer expressly solicited the donor for a donation for making or paying for an electioneering communication.
- (3) The donor and the filer engaged in substantial written or oral discussion regarding the donor's making, donating, or paying for an electioneering communication.
- (4) The donor or the filer knew or had reason to know of the filer's intent to make electioneering communication with the donation.

A donation shall not be deemed to be made to further an electioneering communication if the donation was a commercial transaction occurring in the ordinary course of business between the donor and the filer unless there is affirmative evidence that the amounts were donated to further an electioneering communication. In determining the amount of a donation that was made to further any particular electioneering communication, there shall be excluded any amount that was designated by the donor with respect to a different election than the election that is the subject of the electioneering communication covered by the report.

(d) All reports required by this section shall be filed according to rules adopted by the State Board. If the expense incurred is greater than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), the report shall be filed electronically. The State Board shall provide the software necessary to file the electronic report to any individual or person required to file an electronic report at no cost to that individual or person. (2010-170, s. 3; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

### **§ 163-278.13. Limitation on contributions.**

(a) No individual, political committee, or other entity shall contribute to any candidate or other political committee any money or make any other contribution in any election in excess of six thousand eight hundred dollars (\$6,800) for that election.

(b) Effective for each odd-numbered calendar year beginning in 2015, the dollar amount of the contribution limitation established by subsections (a), (c), and (d) of this subsection shall be increased as provided in this subsection. On July 1 of each even-numbered year, the State Board of Elections shall calculate from data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor Register the percent difference between the price index for the July 1 of the previous even-numbered year. That percentage increase shall be multiplied by the previous dollar amount contribution limit, that number added to the previous dollar amount contribution limit, and the total shall become effective with respect to contributions made or accepted on or after January 1 of the next odd-numbered year. If the amount after adjustment is not a multiple of one hundred dollars (\$100.00), the total shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of one hundred dollars (\$100.00). As used in this subsection the term "price index" means the average over a calendar year of the Consumer Price Index (all items – United States city average) published monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The revised amount of the dollar limit of contributions shall remain in effect for two calendar years until the next adjustment is made. The State Board of Elections shall publish the revised amount in the North Carolina Register and shall notify the Revisor of Statutes who shall adjust the dollar amounts in subsections (a), (c), and (d) of this section.

(c) No candidate or political committee shall accept or solicit any contribution from any individual, other political committee, or other entity of any money or any other contribution in any election in excess of six thousand eight hundred dollars (\$6,800) for that election.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) and (c) of this section, it shall be lawful for a candidate or a candidate's spouse to make a contribution to the candidate or to the candidate's treasurer of any amount of money or to make any other contribution in any election in excess of six thousand eight hundred dollars (\$6,800) for that election.

(e) For the purposes of this section, the term "an election" means the period of time from January 1 of an odd-numbered year through the day of the primary, the day after the primary through the day of the second primary, or the day after the primary through December 31 of the next even-numbered year, without regard to whether the candidate is opposed or unopposed in the election, except that where a candidate is not on the ballot in a second primary, that second primary is not "an election" with respect to that candidate.

(f) Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (c) of this section, a candidate or political committee may accept a contribution knowing that the contribution is to be reimbursed to the entity making the contribution and knowing the candidate or political committee has funds sufficient to reimburse the entity making the contribution if all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The entity submits sufficient information of the contribution to the candidate or political committee for reimbursement within 45 days of the contribution.
- (2) The candidate or political committee makes a reimbursement to the entity making the contribution within seven days of submission of sufficient information.
- (3) The candidate or political committee indicates on its report under G.S. 163-278.11 that the good, service, or other item resulting in the reimbursement is an expenditure of the candidate or political committee, and notes if the contribution was by credit card.
- (4) The contribution does not exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00).

(g) Any contribution, or portion thereof, made under subsection (f) of this section that is not submitted for reimbursement in accordance with subsection (f) of this section shall be treated as a contribution for purposes of this section. Any contribution, or portion thereof, made under

subsection (f) of this section that is not reimbursed in accordance with subsection (f) of this section shall be treated as a contribution for purposes of this section.

(h) This section shall not apply to any national, State, district or county executive committee of any political party or an affiliated party committee. For the purposes of this section only, the term "political party" means only those political parties officially recognized under G.S. 163-96.

(i) No referendum committee which received any contribution from a corporation, labor union, insurance company, business entity, or professional association may make any contribution to another referendum committee, to a candidate or to a political committee.

(j) The contribution limits of subsections (a) and (c) of this section do not apply to contributions made to an independent expenditure political committee. For purposes of this section, an "independent expenditure political committee" is a political committee whose treasurer makes and abides by a certification to the State Board of Elections that the political committee does not and will not make contributions, directly or indirectly, to candidates or to political committees that make contributions to candidates. The State Board of Elections shall provide forms for implementation of this subsection. This subsection shall not apply to a candidate or a political committee controlled by a candidate. The exception of this subsection is in addition to any other exception provided by law. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1979, c. 1073, ss. 8, 20; 1981, c. 225; 1987, c. 565, s. 15; 1993, c. 539, s. 1113; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1997-515, s. 8(a); 1999-31, s. 5(c); 2002-158, s. 2; 2006-192, ss. 15, 16, 17; 2007-391, s. 36; 2007-484, s. 43.8(c); 2007-510, s. 1(c); 2007-540, ss. 2, 3; 2008-150, ss. 6(c), 7(a); 2008-187, s. 33(a); 2013-360, s. 21.1(e), (f); 2013-381, ss. 38.1(h), (i), (j), 42.1, 42.2, 42.3, 53.1(a); 2015-258, s. 3(h); 2015-264, s. 27; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.13A: Repealed by Session Laws 1997-515, s. 9, effective January 1, 1998.**

**§ 163-278.13B. Limitation on fund-raising during legislative session.**

(a) Definitions. – For purposes of this section:

- (1) "Limited contributor" means a lobbyist registered under Chapter 120C of the General Statutes, that lobbyist's agent, that lobbyist's principal as defined in G.S. 120C-100(21) or a political committee that employs or contracts with or whose parent entity employs or contracts with a lobbyist registered under Chapter 120C of the General Statutes.
- (2) "Limited contributee" means a member of or candidate for the Council of State, a member of or candidate for the General Assembly, an affiliated party committee, or a Council of State affiliated party committee.
- (3) The General Assembly is in "regular session" from the date set by law or resolution that the General Assembly convenes until the General Assembly either adjourns sine die or recesses or adjourns for more than 10 days.
- (4) A contribution is "made" during regular session if the check or other instrument is dated during the session, or if the check or other instrument is delivered to the limited contributee during session, or if the limited contributor pledges during the session to deliver the check or other instrument at a later time.
- (5) A contribution is "accepted" during regular session if the check or other instrument is dated during the session, or if the limited contributee receives the

check or other instrument during session and does not return it within 10 days, or agrees during session to receive the check or other instrument at a later time.

(b) Prohibited Solicitations. – While the General Assembly is in regular session, no limited contributee or the real or purported agent of a limited contributee shall:

- (1) Solicit a contribution from a limited contributor to be made to that limited contributee or to be made to any other candidate, officeholder, or political committee; or
- (2) Solicit a third party, requesting or directing that the third party directly or indirectly solicit a contribution from a limited contributor or relay to the limited contributor the limited contributee's solicitation of a contribution.

It shall not be deemed a violation of this section for a limited contributee to serve on a board or committee of an organization that makes a solicitation of a limited contributor as long as that limited contributee does not directly participate in the solicitation and that limited contributee does not directly benefit from the solicitation.

(c) Prohibited Contributions. – While the General Assembly is in regular session:

- (1) No limited contributor shall make or offer to make a contribution to a limited contributee.
- (2) No limited contributor shall make a contribution to any candidate, officeholder, or political committee, directing or requesting that the contribution be made in turn to a limited contributee.
- (3) No limited contributor shall transfer any amount of money or anything of value to any entity, directing or requesting that the entity use what was transferred to contribute to a limited contributee.
- (4) No limited contributee or the real or purported agent of a limited contributee prohibited from solicitation by subsection (b) of this section shall accept a contribution from a limited contributor.
- (5) No limited contributor shall solicit a contribution from any individual or political committee on behalf of a limited contributee. This subdivision does not apply to a limited contributor soliciting a contribution on behalf of a political party executive committee or an affiliated party committee if the solicitation is solely for a separate segregated fund kept by the political party or affiliated party committee limited to use for activities that are not candidate-specific, including generic voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts, pollings, mailings, and other general activities and advertising that do not refer to a specific individual candidate.

(d) Exception. – The provisions of this section do not apply with regard to a limited contributee during the three weeks prior to the day of a second primary if that limited contributee is a candidate who will be on the ballot in that second primary.

(e) Prosecution. – A violation of this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1997-515, s. 9(b); 1999-31, s. 5(d); 1999-453, s. 6(a); 2000-136, s. 1; 2006-201, s. 21; 2015-258, s. 3(i), (s); 2015-264, s. 81(e); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

### **§ 163-278.13C. Campaign contributions prohibition.**

(a) No lobbyist may make a contribution as defined in G.S. 163-278.6 to a candidate or candidate campaign committee as defined in G.S. 163-278.38Z when that candidate meets any of the following criteria:

- (1) Is a legislator as defined in G.S. 120C-100.
- (2) Is a public servant as defined in G.S. 138A-3(30)a and G.S. 120C-104.
- (b) No lobbyist may do any of the following with respect to a candidate or candidate campaign committee described in subdivisions (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this section:
  - (1) Collect a contribution or multiple contributions from one or more contributors intended for that candidate or candidate campaign committee.
  - (2) Take possession of a contribution or multiple contributions intended for that candidate or candidate campaign committee.
  - (3) Transfer or deliver a collected contribution or multiple contributions to the intended candidate or candidate campaign committee.
- (c) This section shall not apply to a lobbyist, who has filed a notice of candidacy for office under G.S. 163-106 or Article 11 of this Chapter or has been nominated under G.S. 163-114 or G.S. 163-98, making a contribution to that lobbyist's candidate campaign committee.
- (d) For purposes of this section, the term "lobbyist" shall mean an individual registered as a lobbyist under Chapter 120C of the General Statutes. (2006-201, s. 18; 2007-347, s. 5(a), (b); 2008-213, s. 86; 2013-381, s. 47.1(a); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.14. No contributions in names of others; no anonymous contributions; contributions in excess of fifty dollars; no contribution without specific designation of contributor.**

(a) No individual, political committee, or other entity shall make any contribution anonymously or in the name of another. No candidate, political committee, referendum committee, political party, affiliated party committee, or treasurer shall knowingly accept any contribution made by any individual or person in the name of another individual or person or made anonymously. If a candidate, political committee, referendum committee, political party, affiliated party committee, or treasurer receives anonymous contributions or contributions determined to have been made in the name of another, he shall pay the money over to the Board, by check, and all such moneys received by the Board shall be deposited in the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund of the State of North Carolina. This subsection shall not apply to any contribution by an individual with the lawful authority to act on behalf of another individual, whether through power of attorney, trustee, or other lawful authority.

(b) No entity shall make, and no candidate, committee or treasurer shall accept, any monetary contribution in excess of fifty dollars (\$50.00) unless such contribution is in the form of a check, draft, money order, credit card charge, debit, or other noncash method that can be subject to written verification. No contribution in the form of check, draft, money order, credit card charge, debits, or other noncash method may be made or accepted unless it contains a specific designation of the intended contributee chosen by the contributor. The State Board may prescribe guidelines as to the reporting and verification of any method of contribution payment allowed under this Article. For contributions by money order, the State Board of Elections shall prescribe methods to ensure an audit trail for every contribution so that the identity of the contributor can be determined. For a contribution made by credit card, the credit card account number of a contributor is not a public record.

(c) No political committee or referendum committee shall make any contribution unless in doing so it reports to the recipient the contributor's name as required in G.S. 163-278.7(b)(1). (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1979, c. 1073, s. 19; 1987, c. 113, s. 2; 1999-453, s. 4(a); 2001-319, s. 10(a);



2002-159, s. 55(k); 2004-125, s. 5(b); 2005-430, s. 1; 2006-195, ss. 1, 5.2; 2007-484, s. 23; 2010-169, s. 6(b); 2015-258, s. 3(j); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.14A. Evidence that communications are "to support or oppose the nomination or election of one or more clearly identified candidates."**

(a) The following shall be means of proving that an individual or other entity acted "to support or oppose the nomination or election of one or more clearly identified candidates": presenting evidence of financial sponsorship of communications to the general public that use phrases such as "vote for", "reelect", "support", "cast your ballot for", "(name of candidate) for (name of office)", "(name of candidate) in (year)", "vote against", "defeat", "reject", "vote pro-(policy position)" or "vote anti-(policy position)" accompanied by a list of candidates clearly labeled "pro-(policy position)" or "anti-(policy position)", or communications of campaign words or slogans, such as posters, bumper stickers, advertisements, etc., which say "(name of candidate)'s the One", "(name of candidate) '98", "(name of candidate)!", or the names of two candidates joined by a hyphen or slash.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, a communication shall not be subject to regulation as a contribution or expenditure under this Article if it:

- (1) Appears in a news story, commentary, or editorial distributed through the facilities of any broadcasting station, newspaper, or magazine, unless those facilities are owned or controlled by any political party, affiliated party committee, or political committee;
- (2) Is distributed by a corporation solely to its stockholders and employees; or
- (3) Is distributed by any organization, association, or labor union solely to its members or to subscribers or recipients of its regular publications, or is made available to individuals in response to their request, including through the Internet. (1999-453, s. 3(a); 2008-150, s. 6(b); 2015-258, s. 3(k); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.15. No acceptance of contributions made by corporations, foreign and domestic, or other prohibited sources.**

(a) No candidate, political committee, political party, affiliated party committee, or treasurer shall accept any contribution made by any corporation, foreign or domestic, regardless of whether such corporation does business in the State of North Carolina, or made by any business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company. This section does not apply with regard to entities permitted to make contributions by G.S. 163-278.19(h).

(b) A candidate or political committee may accept a contribution knowing that the contribution is the proceeds of a loan made in the ordinary course of business by a financial institution if all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The full amount of the loan is secured by collateral placed, or by guaranties given, by one or more individuals or entities who are not prohibited by this Article from making contributions to the candidate or political committee. The value of the collateral posted by each individual or entity, or the amount of each guaranty, may not exceed the contribution limitations applicable under this Article to each individual or entity. The value of collateral posted may exceed the contribution limitations applicable under this Article in cases where the

amount of the loan secured by that collateral does not exceed the contribution limitations applicable to the individual or entity.

- (2) During the time that any loan remains outstanding and unpaid, then the value of any collateral posted, or the amount of each guaranty, for that loan shall be considered to be a contribution by the individual or entity securing the loan. If the loan, or any portion of the loan, is repaid to the financial institution by the candidate or political committee to whom the loan was made during the contribution limitation period for the same "election" as defined in G.S. 163-278.13(e) in which the loan was made, the individual or entity securing the loan shall be eligible to further contribute to that candidate or political committee up to the amount of the repayment. If multiple individuals or entities secured the loan that is repaid to the financial institution by the candidate or political committee, then the amount repaid shall be prorated amongst the multiple individuals or entities.
- (3) If the loan is to the candidate or political committee, only the candidate, the candidate's spouse, or the political committee to whom the loan was made may repay the loan.

The State Board of Elections shall develop forms for reporting the proceeds of loans in a full and accurate manner. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1999-31, s. 5(e); 2006-195, s. 6; 2006-262, s. 4.1(c); 2015-258, s. 3(l); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

#### **§ 163-278.16. Regulations regarding timing of contributions and expenditures.**

Except as provided in G.S. 163-278.6(74) and G.S. 163-278.12, no contribution may be received or expenditure made by or on behalf of a candidate, political committee, or referendum committee:

- (1) Until the candidate, political committee, or referendum committee appoints a treasurer and certifies the name and address of the treasurer to the Board; and
- (2) Unless the contribution is received or the expenditure made by or through the treasurer of the candidate, political committee, or referendum committee. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1975, c. 565, s. 2; 1979, c. 500, s. 4; c. 1073, ss. 19, 20; 1987, c. 652; 1997-515, s. 13.1(a); 1999-31, ss. 1(d), 4(b); 1999-453, s. 2(b); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

#### **§ 163-278.16A. Restriction on use of State funds by declared candidate for Council of State for advertising or public service announcements using their names, pictures, or voices.**

After December 31 prior to a general election in which a Council of State office will be on the ballot, no declared candidate for that Council of State office shall use or permit the use of State funds for any advertisement or public service announcement in a newspaper, on radio, or on television that contains that declared candidate's name, picture, or voice, except in case of State or national emergency and only if the announcement is reasonably necessary to that candidate's official function. For purposes of this section, "declared candidate" means someone who has publicly announced an intention to run. (1997-515, s. 13(a); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

#### **§ 163-278.16B. Use of contributions for certain purposes.**

(a) A candidate or candidate campaign committee may use contributions only for the following purposes:

- (1) Expenditures resulting from the campaign for public office by the candidate or candidate's campaign committee.
- (2) Expenditures resulting from holding public office.
- (3) Donations to an organization described in section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. § 170(c)), provided that the candidate or the candidate's spouse, children, parents, brothers, or sisters are not employed by the organization.
- (4) Contributions to a national, State, or district or county committee of a political party or a caucus of the political party or an affiliated party committee.
- (5) Contributions to another candidate or candidate's campaign committee.
- (6) To return all or a portion of a contribution to the contributor.
- (7) Payment of any penalties against the candidate or candidate's campaign committee for violation of this Article imposed by a board of elections or a court of competent jurisdiction.
- (8) Payment to the Escheat Fund established by Chapter 116B of the General Statutes.
- (9) Legal expense donation not in excess of four thousand dollars (\$4,000) per calendar year to a legal expense fund established pursuant to Article 22M of this Chapter.

(b) As used in this section, the term "candidate campaign committee" means the same as in G.S. 163-278.38Z(3).

(c) Contributions made to a candidate or candidate campaign committee do not become a part of the personal estate of the individual candidate. The candidate may file with the board a written designation of those funds that directs to which of the permitted uses in subsection (a) of this section those funds shall be paid in the event of the death or incapacity of the candidate. If the candidate fails to file the written designation before death, the personal representative of the estate may file the written designation within 90 days of the date of death, and may only direct those funds to donations under subdivision (a)(3) of this section. After the payment of permitted outstanding debts of the account, the candidate's filed written designation shall control. If the candidate files no such written designation, the funds after payment of permitted outstanding debts shall be distributed in accordance with subdivision (a)(8) of this section. (2006-161, s. 1; 2007-391, s. 30; 2008-187, s. 33(a); 2008-213, s. 87; 2009-534, s. 2(h); 2010-100, s. 1; 2015-258, s. 3(m); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

#### **§ 163-278.17. Statements of media outlets regarding political advertising.**

(a) Each media outlet shall require written authority for each expenditure from each candidate, treasurer or individual making or authorizing an expenditure. A candidate may authorize advertisement paid for by a treasurer appointed by the candidate. All written authorizations of expenditures signed by a candidate, treasurer or individual shall be deemed public records and copies of those written authorizations shall be available for inspection during normal business hours at the office(s) of the media outlet making the publication or broadcast nearest to the place(s) of publication or broadcast.

(b) Each media outlet shall require written authority for each independent expenditure or electioneering communication from each individual, person, or entity making or authorizing an

independent expenditure or electioneering communication. All written authorizations of independent expenditures or electioneering communications shall be deemed public records, and copies of those written authorizations shall be available for inspection during normal business hours at the office(s) of the media outlet making the publication or broadcast nearest to the place(s) of publication or broadcast. The written authorization shall include all of the following:

- (1) The name and address of the individual, person, or entity making the independent expenditure or electioneering communication.
- (2) The information required by G.S. 163-278.39(a), provided however that the provisions of G.S. 163-278.39(a)(7) and (a)(8) shall not apply to radio or television advertising. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1975, c. 565, s. 3; 1979, c. 500, ss. 5, 6; c. 1073, s. 9; 1985, c. 183, ss. 1, 2; 2010-170, s. 4; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.18. Normal commercial charges for political advertising.**

(a) No media and no supplier of materials or services shall charge or require a candidate, treasurer, political party, affiliated party committee, or individual to pay a charge for advertising, materials, space, or services purchased for or in support of or in opposition to any candidate, political committee, or political party that is higher than the normal charge it requires other customers to pay for comparable advertising, materials, space, or services purchased for other purposes.

(b) A newspaper, magazine, or other advertising medium shall not charge any candidate, treasurer, political committee, political party, or individual for any advertising for or in support of or in opposition to any candidate, political committee or political party at a rate higher than the comparable rate charged to other persons for advertising of comparable frequency and volume; and every candidate, treasurer, political party or individual, with respect to political advertising, shall be entitled to the same discounts afforded by the advertising medium to other advertisers under comparable conditions and circumstances. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1977, c. 856; 2015-258, s. 3(n); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.19. Violations by corporations, business entities, labor unions, professional associations and insurance companies.**

(a) Except as provided in subsections (c), (d), (f), (g), (h), and (i) of this section it shall be unlawful for any corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company directly or indirectly do any of the following:

- (1) To make any contribution to a candidate or political committee.
- (2) To pay or use or offer, consent or agree to pay or use any of its money or property for any contribution to a candidate or political committee.
- (3) To compensate, reimburse, or indemnify any person or individual for money or property so used or for any contribution or expenditure so made.

It shall also be unlawful for any officer, director, stockholder, attorney, agent or member of any corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company to aid, abet, advise or consent to any such contribution, or for any person or individual to solicit or knowingly receive any such contribution. Supporting or opposing the election of clearly identified candidates includes supporting or opposing the candidates of a clearly identified political party. Any officer, director, stockholder, attorney, agent or member of any corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company aiding or abetting in any contribution

made in violation of this section shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor, and shall in addition be liable to such corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company for the amount of such contribution and the same may be recovered of him upon suit by any stockholder or member thereof.

(b) A transfer of funds shall be deemed to have been a contribution made indirectly if it is made to any committee, affiliated party committee, or political party account, whether inside or outside this State, with the intent or purpose of being exchanged in whole or in part for any other funds to be contributed or expended in an election for North Carolina office or to offset any other funds contributed or expended in an election for North Carolina office.

(c) Proceeds of loans made in the ordinary course of business by financial institutions may be used for contributions made in compliance with this Subchapter. Financial institutions may also grant revolving credit to political committees and referendum committees in the ordinary course of business.

(d) It shall, however, be lawful for any corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company to communicate with its employees, stockholders or members and their families on any subject; to conduct nonpartisan registration and get-out-the-vote campaigns aimed at their employees, stockholders, or members and their families; or for officials and employees of any corporation, insurance company or business entity or the officials and members of any labor union or professional association to establish, administer, contribute to, and to receive and solicit contributions to a separate segregated fund to be utilized for political purposes, and those individuals shall be deemed to become and be a political committee as that term is defined in G.S. 163-278.6(74) or a referendum committee as defined in G.S. 163-278.6(84); provided, however, that it shall be unlawful for any such fund to make a contribution or expenditure by utilizing contributions secured by physical force, job discrimination, financial reprisals or the threat of force, job discrimination or financial reprisals, or by dues, fees, or other moneys required as a condition of membership or employment or as a requirement with respect to any terms or conditions of employment, including, without limitation, hiring, firing, transferring, promoting, demoting, or granting seniority or employment-related benefits of any kind, or by moneys obtained in any commercial transaction whatsoever.

(e) A violation of this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor. In addition, the acceptance of any contribution, reimbursement, or indemnification under subsection (a) shall be a Class 2 misdemeanor.

(f) Whenever a candidate or treasurer is an officer, director, stockholder, attorney, agent, or employee of any corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company, and by virtue of his position therewith uses office space and communication facilities of the corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company in the normal and usual scope of his employment, the fact that the candidate or treasurer receives telephone calls, mail, or visits in such office which relates to activities prohibited by this Article shall not be considered a violation under this section.

(g) Notwithstanding the prohibitions specified in this Article and Article 22 of this Chapter, a political committee organized under provisions of this Article shall be entitled to receive and the corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company designated on the committee's organizational report as the parent entity of the employees or members who organized the committee is authorized to give reasonable administrative support that shall include record keeping, computer services, billings, mailings to members of the committee,

membership development, fund-raising activities, office supplies, office space, and such other support as is reasonably necessary for the administration of the committee.

The approximate cost of any reasonable administrative support shall be submitted to the committee, in writing, and the committee shall include that cost on the report required by G.S. 163-278.9(a)(4). Also included in the report shall be the approximate allocable portion of the compensation of any officer or employee of the corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company who has devoted more than thirty-five percent (35%) of his time during normal business hours of the corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company during the period covered by the required report. The approximate cost submitted by the parent corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company shall be entered on the committee's report as the final entry on its list of "contributions" and a copy of the written approximate cost received by it shall be attached.

The reasonable administrative support given by a corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company shall be designated on the books of the corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company as such and may not be treated by it as a business deduction for State income tax purposes.

- (h) This section does not prohibit a contribution by an [a] person or entity that:
  - (1) Has as an express purpose promoting social, educational, or political ideas and not to generate business income;
  - (2) Does not have shareholders or other persons which have an economic interest in its assets and earnings; and
  - (3) Was not established by a business corporation, by an insurance company, by a business entity, including, but not limited to, those chartered under Chapter 55, Chapter 55A, Chapter 55B, or Chapter 58 of the General Statutes, by a professional association, or by a labor union and does not receive substantial revenue from such entities. Substantial revenue is rebuttably presumed to be more than ten percent (10%) of total revenues in a calendar year.

(i) If a political committee has as its only purpose accepting contributions and making expenditures to influence elections, and that political committee incorporates as a nonprofit corporation to shield its participants from liability created outside this Subchapter, that political committee is not considered to be a corporation for purposes of this section. Incorporation of a political committee does not relieve any individual, person, or other entity of any liability, duty, or obligation created pursuant to any provision of this Subchapter. To obtain the benefits of this subsection, an incorporating political committee must state exactly the following language as the only purpose for which the corporation can be organized: "to accept contributions and make expenditures to influence elections as a political committee pursuant to G.S. 163-278.6(74) only." No political committee shall do business as a political committee after incorporation unless it has been certified by the State Board as being in compliance with this subsection. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1975, c. 565, s. 6; 1979, c. 517, ss. 1, 2; 1985, c. 354; 1987, c. 113, s. 3; c. 565, s. 16; 1993, c. 539, ss. 1115, 1116; c. 553, s. 69; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1999-31, ss. 4(d), 5(a), 6(b); 2001-487, s. 97(a); 2002-159, s. 57.3(a), (b); 2006-195, s. 3; 2006-262, ss. 4.1(a), (b), 4.3; 2010-170, s. 5; 2015-258, s. 3(o); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

#### **§ 163-278.19A. Contributions allowed.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, it is lawful for any person as defined in G.S. 163-278.6(72) to contribute to a referendum committee. (1979, c. 1073, s. 7; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.19B. Political party headquarters building funds.**

(a) Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 163-278.19, a person prohibited by that section from making a contribution may donate to political parties, and affiliated party committees and political parties and affiliated party committees may accept from such a person, money and other things of value donated to a political party headquarters building fund.

(b) Donations made to the political party headquarters building fund in accordance with this section shall be subject to all the following rules:

- (1) The donations solicited and accepted are designated to the political party headquarters building fund.
- (2) Potential donors to the political party headquarters building fund are advised that all donations will be exclusively for the political party headquarters building fund.
- (3) The political party or affiliated party committee establishes a separate segregated bank account into which shall be deposited only donations for the political party headquarters building fund from persons prohibited by G.S. 163-278.19 from making contributions.
- (4) The donations deposited in the separate segregated bank account for the political party headquarters building fund shall be spent only as follows:
  - a. To purchase a principal headquarters building, to construct a principal headquarters building, to renovate a principal headquarters building, or to pay a mortgage on a principal headquarters building.
  - b. To pay building rent or monthly or bimonthly utility expenses incurred to operate the principal headquarters building.
  - c. To compensate personnel including in-kind benefits for no more than three personnel whose functions are primarily administrative in nature, such as providing accounting, payroll, or campaign finance reporting services, for the party and whose job functions require no more than ten percent (10%) of work time to be spent on political advocacy each calendar year.
  - d. To repay donors if a principal headquarters building is not purchased, constructed, renovated, or rented.
  - e. To fund legal actions as defined in G.S. 163-278.300(4).
  - f. To make a legal expense donation to a legal expense fund under Article 22M of this Chapter.
- (5) The political party executive committee or affiliated party committee shall report donations to and spending by a political party headquarters building fund on every report required to be made by G.S. 163-278.9. If a committee is excused from making general campaign finance reports under G.S. 163-278.10A, that committee shall nonetheless report donations in any amount to and spending in any amount by the political party headquarters building fund at the times required for reports in G.S. 163-278.9.

(c) Donations deposited into a political party headquarters building fund shall be used solely for the purposes set forth in this section. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the political party headquarters building fund shall not be used for headquarters equipment other than fixtures, personnel compensation, travel, fundraising expenses, or other expenses of any kind.

(d) Donations made to, and spending by, a political party headquarters building fund in accordance with this section shall not constitute contributions or expenditures as defined in G.S. 163-278.6. (1999-426, s. 9(a); 2013-381, s. 43.1; 2015-258, s. 3(p); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b); 2024-57, s. 3A.5(a).)

**§ 163-278.20. Repealed by Session Laws 2006-195, s. 2, effective January 1, 2007, and applicable to all contributions made and accepted on and after that date.**

**§ 163-278.21. Promulgation of policy and administration through State Board of Elections.**

The State Board of Elections shall have responsibility, adequate staff, equipment and facilities, for promulgating all regulations necessary for the enforcement and administration of this Article and to prevent the circumvention of the provisions of this Article. The State Board of Elections shall empower the Executive Director with the responsibility for the administrative operations required to administer this Article and may delegate or assign to him such other duties from time to time by regulations or orders of the State Board of Elections. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1975, c. 798, s. 7; 1999-453, s. 5(c); 2001-319, s. 11; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.22. Duties of State Board.**

It shall be the duty and power of the State Board:

- (1) To prescribe forms of statements and other information required to be filed by this Article, to furnish such forms to the county boards of elections and individuals, media or others required to file such statements and information, and to prepare, publish and distribute or cause to be distributed to all candidates at the time they file notices of candidacy a manual setting forth the provisions of this Article and a prescribed uniform system for accounts required to file statements by this Article.
- (2) To accept and file any information voluntarily supplied that exceeds the requirements of this Article.
- (3) To develop a filing, coding, and cross-indexing system consonant with the purposes of this Article.
- (4) To make statements and other information filed with it available to the public at a charge not to exceed actual cost of copying.
- (5) To preserve reports and statements filed under this Article. Such reports and statements, after a period of two years following the election year, may be transferred to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Office of Archives and History, and shall be preserved for a period of 10 years.
- (6) To prepare and publish such reports as it may deem appropriate.
- (7) To make investigations to the extent the State Board deems necessary with respect to statements filed under the provisions of this Article and with respect to alleged failures to file any statement required under the provisions of this Article or Article 22M of [this Chapter of] the General Statutes and, upon complaint, signed and sworn under oath or affirmation, by any registered voter,



with respect to alleged violations of any part of this Article or Article 22M of [this Chapter of] the General Statutes. All investigations shall be confidential, and no investigation shall be initiated more than four years from the earliest of the following dates:

- a. The facts constituting the violation are known to the State Board or county board with jurisdiction.
  - b. The facts constituting the violation can be determined from the public record.
  - c. The complainant knew or should have known of the conduct upon which the complaint is based.
- (7a) To request and receive confidential recommendations from the State Ethics Commission regarding the appropriateness of a criminal referral of campaign finance violations.
  - (8) After investigation and receipt of the confidential recommendations regarding the appropriateness of a criminal referral for campaign finance violations, to report apparent violations by candidates, political committees, referendum committees, legal expense funds, individuals or persons to the proper district attorney as provided in G.S. 163-278.27.
  - (9) To prescribe and furnish forms of statements and other material to the county boards of elections for distribution to candidates and committees required to be filed with the county boards.
  - (10) To instruct the chairman and director of elections of each county board as to their respective duties and responsibilities relative to the administration of this Article.
  - (11) To require appropriate certification of delinquent or late filings from the county boards of elections and to execute the same responsibilities relative to such reports as provided in G.S. 163-278.27.
  - (12) To assist county boards of elections in resolving questions arising from the administration of this Article.
  - (13) To require county boards of elections to hold such hearings, make such investigations, and make reports to the State Board as the State Board deems necessary in the administration of this Article.
  - (14) To calculate, assess, and collect civil penalties pursuant to this Article.
  - (15) To establish a process for determination as to whether communication is an expenditure, independent expenditure, or electioneering communication prior to the airing or distribution of that communication when so requested by an individual or person producing a communication. The responsibility for the determination may be delegated to the Executive Director. If the responsibility is delegated to the Executive Director, the process established by the State Board shall require a written determination by the Executive Director to include stated findings and an opportunity for immediate appeal to the State Board of the determination by the Executive Director. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1975, c. 798, s. 8; 1977, c. 626, s. 1; 1979, c. 500, ss. 9, 12, 13; c. 1073, s. 18; 1995, c. 243, s. 1; 1997-515, s. 7(e); 2002-159, s. 35(n); 2007-349, ss. 2, 3; 2010-170, s. 6; 2015- 241, s. 14.30(s); 2016-125, 4th Ex. Sess., s. 5(k); 2017-6, ss. 2, 3, 7(k); 2018-146, ss. 3.1(a), (b), 4.2(b), 4.11(c).)

### **§ 163-278.23. Duties of Executive Director of State Board.**

The Executive Director of the State Board shall inspect or cause to be inspected each statement filed with the State Board under this Article within 30 days after the date it is filed. The Executive Director shall advise, or cause to be advised, no more than 30 days and at least five days before each report is due, each candidate or treasurer whose organizational report has been filed, of the specific date each report is due. He shall immediately notify any individual, candidate, treasurer, political committee, referendum committee, media, or other entity that may be required to file a statement under this Article if:

- (1) It appears that the individual, candidate, treasurer, political committee, referendum committee, media, or other entity has failed to file a statement as required by law or that a statement filed does not conform to this Article; or
- (2) A written complaint is filed under oath with the State Board by any registered voter of this State alleging that a statement filed with the State Board does not conform to this Article or to the truth or that an individual, candidate, treasurer, political committee, referendum committee, media, or other entity has failed to file a statement required by this Article.

The entity that is the subject of the complaint will be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint before any action is taken requiring compliance.

The Executive Director of the Board of Elections shall issue written opinions to candidates, the communications media, political committees, referendum committees, or other entities upon request, regarding filing procedures and compliance with this Article. Any such opinion so issued shall specifically refer to this paragraph. If the candidate, communications media, political committees, referendum committees, or other entities rely on and comply with the opinion of the Executive Director of the Board of Elections, then prosecution or civil action on account of the procedure followed pursuant thereto and prosecution for failure to comply with the statute inconsistent with the written ruling of the Executive Director of the Board of Elections issued to the candidate or committee involved shall be barred. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to prohibit or delay the regular and timely filing of reports. The Executive Director shall file all opinions issued pursuant to this section with the Codifier of Rules to be published unedited in the North Carolina Register and the State Board of Elections website.

This section applies to Article 22M of this Chapter to the same extent that it applies to this Article. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1975, c. 334; c. 565, s. 4; 1979, c. 500, s. 7; c. 1073, ss. 12, 13, 17; 1985, c. 759, s. 6.1; 1999-424, s. 6(c); 1999-453, s. 5(b); 1999-456, s. 63; 2001-319, s. 11; 2005-430, s. 8; 2007-349, s. 6; 2013-360, s. 21.1(g); 2013-381, ss. 38.1(k), 48.3; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b); 2023-134, s. 21.2(k).)

### **§ 163-278.24. Statements examined within four months.**

Within four months after the date of each election or referendum, the Executive Director shall examine or cause to be examined each statement filed with the Board under this Article, and, referring to the election or referendum, determine whether the statement conforms to law and to the truth. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1979, c. 500, s. 8; c. 1073, s. 14; 1985, c. 183, s. 3; 2001-319, s. 11; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

### **§ 163-278.25. Issuance of declaration of nomination or certificate of election.**

No declaration of nomination and no certificate of election shall be granted to any candidate until the candidate or his treasurer has filed the statements referring to the election he is required to file under this Article. Within 24 hours after reaching a decision that a declaration of nomination or certificate of election should not be granted, the Board shall give written notice of that decision, by telegraph or certified mail, to the candidate and the candidate's treasurer. Failure to grant certification shall not affect a successful candidate's title to an office to which he has been otherwise duly elected. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.26. Appeals from State Board of Elections; early docketing.**

Any candidate for nomination or election who is denied a declaration of nomination or certificate of election, pursuant to G.S. 163-278.25, may, within five days after the action of the Board under that section, appeal to the Superior Court of Wake County for a final determination of any questions of law or fact which may be involved in the Board's action. The cause shall be entitled "In the Matter of the Candidacy of . . . . . ." It shall be placed on the civil docket of that court and shall have precedence over all other civil actions. In the event of an appeal, the chairman of the Board shall certify the record to the clerk of that court within five days after the appeal is noted.

The record on appeal shall consist of all reports filed by the candidate or his treasurer with the Board pursuant to this Article, and a memorandum of the Board setting forth with particularity the reasons for its action in denying the candidate a declaration of nomination or certificate of election. Written notice of the appeal shall be given to the Board by the candidate or his attorney, and may be effected by mail or personal delivery. On appeal, the cause shall be heard de novo. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.27. Criminal penalties; duty to report and prosecute.**

(a) Any individual, candidate, political committee, referendum committee, treasurer, person or media who intentionally violates the applicable provisions of G.S. 163-278.7, 163-278.8, 163-278.9, 163-278.10, 163-278.11, 163-278.12, 163-278.13, 163-278.13B, 163-278.14, 163-278.16, 163-278.16B, 163-278.17, 163-278.18, 163-278.19, 163-278.20, 163-278.39, 163-278.40A, 163-278.40B, 163-278.40C, 163-278.40D, 163-278.40E, or 163-278.40J is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. The statute of limitations as stated in G.S. 15-1 shall run from the day the last report is due to be filed with the appropriate board of elections for the election cycle for which the violation occurred.

(b) A violation of G.S. 163-278.32 by making a certification knowing the information to be untrue is a Class I felony.

(c) A person or individual who intentionally violates G.S. 163-278.14(a) or G.S. 163-278.19(a) and the unlawful contributions total more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) per election is guilty of a Class I felony.

(c1) The Board shall refer apparent violations under this section to the State Ethics Commission. The State Ethics Commission shall investigate and make confidential recommendations to the Board regarding the appropriateness of a criminal referral for those alleged violations, as provided in G.S. 138A-13.5. The Board shall not take action under subsection (b) of this section for 90 days after the referral to the State Ethics Commission.

(d) Following receipt and consideration of the confidential recommendation from the State Ethics Commission as provided in subsection (a3) of this section, if the Board has knowledge of or has reason to believe there has been a violation of any section of this Article, it shall report that fact,

together with accompanying details and a copy of the recommendation issued by the State Ethics Commission, to the following prosecuting authorities:

- (1) In the case of a candidate for nomination or election to the State Senate or State House of Representatives: report to the district attorney of the prosecutorial district in which the candidate for nomination or election resides;
  - (2) In the case of a candidate for nomination or election to the office of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, State Auditor, State Treasurer, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Attorney General, State Commissioner of Agriculture, State Commissioner of Labor, State Commissioner of Insurance, and all other State elective offices, Justice of the Supreme Court, Judge of the Court of Appeals, judge of a superior court, judge of a district court, and district attorney of the superior court: report to the district attorney of the prosecutorial district in which Wake County is located;
  - (3) In the case of an individual other than a candidate, including, without limitation, violations by members of political committees, referendum committees or treasurers: report to the district attorney of the prosecutorial district in which the individual resides; and
  - (4) In the case of a person or any group of individuals: report to the district attorney or district attorneys of the prosecutorial district or districts in which any of the officers, directors, agents, employees or members of the person or group reside.
- (e) Upon receipt of such a report from the Board, the appropriate district attorney shall prosecute the individual or persons alleged to have violated a section or sections of this Article.
- (f) As a condition of probation, a sentencing judge may order that the costs incurred by the State Board of Elections in investigating and aiding the prosecution of a case be paid to the State Board of Elections by the defendant on such terms and conditions as set by the judge. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1979, c. 500, s. 10; c. 1073, ss. 15, 19; 1981, c. 837, s. 4; 1987, c. 565, s. 17; 1993, c. 539, s. 1118; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1999-453, s. 2(c); 2001-419, s. 2; 2006-161, s. 5; 2007-391, s. 1(b); 2008-150, s. 9(b); 2008-187, s. 29; 2010-169, s. 6(a); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, ss. 3.1(a), (b), 4.11(d).)

#### **§ 163-278.28. Issuance of injunctions; special prosecutors named.**

(a) The superior courts of this State shall have jurisdiction to issue injunctions or grant any other equitable relief appropriate to enforce the provisions of this Article upon application by any registered voter of the State.

(b) If the Board makes a report to a district attorney under G.S. 163-278.27 and no prosecution is initiated within 45 days after the report is made, any registered voter of the prosecutorial district to whose district attorney a report has been made, or any board of elections in that district, may, by verified affidavit, petition the superior court for that district for the appointment of a special prosecutor to prosecute the individuals or persons who have or who are believed to have violated any section of this Article. Upon receipt of a petition for the appointment of a special prosecutor, the superior court shall issue an order to show cause, directed at the individuals or persons alleged in the petition to be in violation of this Article, why a special prosecutor should not be appointed. If there is no answer to the order, the court shall appoint a special prosecutor. If there is an answer, the court shall hold a hearing on the order, at which both the petitioning and answering parties may be heard, to determine whether a prima facie case of a violation and failure to prosecute exists. If there is such a prima facie case, the court shall so find

and shall thereupon appoint a special prosecutor to prosecute the alleged violators. The special prosecutor shall take the oath required of assistant district attorneys by G.S. 7A-63, shall serve as an assistant district attorney pro tem of the appropriate district, and shall prosecute the alleged violators. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1979, c. 500, s. 11; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.29. Compelling self-incriminating testimony; individual so testifying excused from prosecution.**

No individual shall be excused from attending or testifying or producing any books, papers, or other documents before any court upon any proceeding or trial of another for the violation of any of the provisions of this Article, upon the ground or for the reason that the testimony or evidence, documentary or otherwise, required of him may tend to incriminate him, but such individual may be subpoenaed and required to testify by and for the State relative to any offense arising under the provisions of this Article; but such individual shall not be prosecuted or subjected to any penalty or forfeiture for or on account of any transaction, matter or thing concerning which he may be compelled to testify or produce evidence, documentary or otherwise, and no compelled testimony so given or produced shall be used against him upon any criminal proceeding, but such individual so compelled to testify with respect to any acts of his own shall be immune from prosecution on account thereof. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.30. Candidates for federal offices to file information reports.**

Candidates for nomination in a party primary or for election in a general or special election to the offices of United States Senator, member of the United States House of Representatives, President or Vice-President of the United States shall file with the Board all reports they or political committee treasurers or other agents acting for them are required to file under the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, P.L. 92-225, as amended (T. 2, U.S.C. section 439). Those reports shall be filed with the Board at the times required by that act. The Board shall, with respect to those reports, have the following duties only:

- (1) To receive and maintain in an orderly manner all reports and statements required to be filed with it;
- (2) To preserve reports and statements filed under the Federal Election Campaign Act. Such reports and statements, after a period of two years following the election year, may be transferred to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, and shall be preserved for a period of 10 years or for such period as may be required by federal law;
- (3) To make the reports and statements filed with it available for public inspection and copying during regular office hours, commencing as soon as practicable but not later than the end of the day during which they were received, and to permit copying of any such report or statement by hand or by duplicating machine, requested by any individual, at the expense of such individual; and
- (4) To compile and maintain a current list of all statements or parts of statements pertaining to each candidate.

Any duty of a candidate to file and the State Board to receive and make available under this section may be met by an agreement between the State Board and the Federal Election Commission, the effect of which is for the Federal Election Commission to provide promptly to the State Board the information required by this section. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1979, c. 500, s. 14; 2002-159, s. 55(l); 2015-241, s. 14.30(s); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.31. Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 183, s. 4.**

**§ 163-278.32. Statements under oath.**

Any statement required to be filed under this Article shall be signed and certified as true and correct by the individual, media, candidate, treasurer or others required to file it, and shall be certified as true and correct to the best of the knowledge of the individual, media, candidate, treasurer or others filing the statement; provided further that the candidate shall certify as true and correct to the best of his knowledge the organizational report and appointment of treasurer filed for the candidate or the candidate's principal campaign committee. A certification under this Article shall be treated as under oath, and any person making a certification under this Article knowing the information to be untrue is guilty of a Class I felony. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1999-426, s. 10(a); 2001-235, s. 1; 2007-391, s. 1(a); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.33. Applicability of Article 22.**

Sections 163-271 through 163-278 shall be applicable to the offices covered by this Article and G.S. 163-271 through 163-278 shall be applicable to all elective offices not covered by this Article. (1973, c. 1272, s. 3; 1975, c. 50; c. 565, s. 10; 2002-159, s. 21(f); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.34. Civil penalties.**

(a) Civil Penalties for Late Filing. – Except as provided in G.S. 163-278.9 and G.S. 163-278.9A, all reports, statements or other documents required by this Article to be filed with the Board shall be filed either by manual delivery to or by mail addressed to the Board. Timely filing shall be complete if postmarked on the day the reports, statements or other documents are to be delivered to the Board. If a report, statement or other document is not filed within the time required by this Article, then the individual, person, media, candidate, political committee, referendum committee or treasurer responsible for filing shall pay to the State Board of Elections election enforcement costs and a civil late penalty as follows:

- (1) Two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) per day for each day the filing is late for a report that affects statewide elections, not to exceed a total of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000); and
- (2) Fifty dollars (\$50.00) per day for each day the filing is late for a report that affects only nonstatewide elections, not to exceed a total of five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

If the form is filed by mail, no civil late penalty shall be assessed for any day after the date of postmark. No civil late penalty shall be assessed for any day when the Board office at which the report is due is closed. The State Board shall immediately notify, or cause to be notified, late filers, from which reports are apparently due, by mail, of the penalties under this section. The State Board of Elections may waive a late penalty if it determines there is good cause for the waiver.

If the Board determines by clear and convincing evidence that the late filing constitutes a willful attempt to conceal contributions or expenditures, the Board may assess a civil penalty in an amount to be determined by that Board, plus the costs of investigation, assessment, and collection. The civil penalty shall not exceed three times the amount of the contributions and expenditures willfully attempted to be concealed.

(b) Civil Penalties for Illegal Contributions and Expenditures. – If an individual, person, political committee, referendum committee, candidate, or other entity intentionally makes or accepts a contribution or makes an unlawful expenditure in violation of this Article, then that entity shall pay to the State Board of Elections, in an amount to be determined by that Board, a civil penalty and the costs of investigation, assessment, and collection. The civil penalty shall not exceed three times the amount of the unlawful contribution or expenditure involved in the violation. The State Board of Elections may, in addition to the civil penalty, order that the amount unlawfully received be paid to the State Board by check, and any money so received by the State Board shall be deposited in the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund of North Carolina.

(c) Civil Remedies Other Than Penalties. – The State Board of Elections, in lieu of or in addition to imposing a civil penalty under subsection (a) or (b) of this section, may take one or more of the following actions with respect to a violation for which a civil penalty could be imposed:

- (1) Issue an order requiring the violator to cease and desist from the violation found.
- (2) Issue an order to cease receiving contributions and making expenditures until a delinquent report has been filed and any civil penalty satisfied.
- (3) Issue an order requiring the violator to take any remedial action deemed appropriate by the Board.
- (4) Issue an order requiring the violator to file any report, statement, or other information as required by this Article or the rules adopted by the Board.
- (5) Publicly reprimand the violator for the violation.

(d) Facts in Mitigation. – An individual or other entity notified that a penalty has been assessed against it may submit an affidavit to the State Board of Elections stating the facts in mitigation. The State Board of Elections may waive a civil penalty in whole or in part if it determines there is good cause for the waiver.

(e) Calculation and Assessment. – The State Board shall calculate and assess the amount of the civil penalty due under subsection (a) or (b) of this section and shall notify the person who is assessed the civil penalty of the amount. The notice of assessment shall be served by any means authorized under G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4, and shall direct the violator either to pay the assessment or to contest the assessment within 30 days by filing a petition for a contested case under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. If a violator does not pay a civil penalty assessed by the Board within 30 days after it is due, the Board shall request the Attorney General to institute a civil action to recover the amount of the assessment. The civil action may be brought in the superior court of any county where the report was due to be filed or any county where the violator resides or maintains an office. A civil action must be filed within three years of the date the assessment was due. An assessment that is not contested is due when the violator is served with a notice of assessment. An assessment that is contested is due at the conclusion of the administrative and judicial review of the assessment. The State Board of Elections shall pay the clear proceeds of civil penalties collected under this section to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund pursuant to G.S. 115C-457.2. The State Board of Elections shall reduce the monies collected by the enforcement costs and the collection costs to determine the clear proceeds payable to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund. Monies set aside for the costs of enforcement and the costs of collection shall be credited to accounts of the State Board of Elections.

(f) OAH Review. – After assessing a civil penalty under subsection (b) of this section or imposing a civil remedy under subsection (c) of this section, appeal of the decision of the State

Board of Elections under this section shall be in accordance with Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 1975, c. 565, s. 5; 1979, c. 1073, s. 19; 1997-515, s. 7(a); 2001-353, s. 10; 2001-419, s. 1; 2007-391, ss. 2(a), 37; 2008-187, s. 33(a); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a) (b); 2018-146, s. 4.4.)

**§ 163-278.34A. Presumptions.**

In any proceeding brought pursuant to this Article in which a presumption arises from the proof of certain facts, the defendant may offer some evidence to rebut the presumption, but the State bears the ultimate burden of proving the essential elements of its case. (1999-31, s. 1(c); 1999-453, s. 3.1(a); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.35. Preservation of records.**

All reports, records and accounts required by this Article to be made, kept, filed, or maintained by any individual, media, candidate or treasurer shall be preserved and retained by the individual, media, candidate or treasurer for at least two years counting from the date of the election to which such reports, records and accounts refer. (1973, c. 1272, s. 1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.36. Repealed by Session Laws 2007-349, s. 4, effective January 1, 2008.**

**§ 163-278.37. County boards of elections to preserve reports.**

The county boards of elections shall preserve all reports and statements filed with them pursuant to this Article for such period of time as directed by the State Board. (1979, c. 500, s. 15; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.38. Effect of failure to comply.**

The failure to comply with the provisions of this Article shall not invalidate the results of any referendum. (1979, c. 1073, s. 11; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.38A. Reserved for future codification purposes.**

**§ 163-278.38B. Reserved for future codification purposes.**

**§ 163-278.38C. Reserved for future codification purposes.**

**§ 163-278.38D. Reserved for future codification purposes.**

**§ 163-278.38E. Reserved for future codification purposes.**

**§ 163-278.38F. Reserved for future codification purposes.**

**§ 163-278.38G. Reserved for future codification purposes.**

**§ 163-278.38H. Reserved for future codification purposes.**

**§ 163-278.38I. Reserved for future codification purposes.**



§ 163-278.38J. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38K. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38L. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38M. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38N. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38O. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38P. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38Q. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38R. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38S. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38T. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38U. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38V. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38W. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38X. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.38Y. Reserved for future codification purposes.

Part 1A. Disclosure Requirements for Media Advertisements.

**§ 163-278.38Z. Definitions.**

As used in this Part:

- (1) "Advertisement" means any message appearing in the print media, on television, or on radio that constitutes a contribution or expenditure under this Article.
- (2) "Candidate" means any individual who, with respect to a public office listed in G.S. 163-278.6(80), has filed a notice of candidacy, notice of retention, or a petition requesting to be a candidate, or has been certified as a nominee of a political party for a vacancy, or has otherwise qualified as a candidate in a manner authorized by law, or has filed a statement of organization under G.S. 163-278.7 and is required to file periodic financial disclosure statements under G.S. 163-278.9.

- (3) "Candidate campaign committee" means any political committee organized by or under the direction of a candidate, except for an affiliated party committee as defined in G.S. 163-278.6(1).
- (4) "Full-screen" means the only picture appearing on the television screen during the oral disclosure statement contains the disclosing person, that the picture occupies all visible space on the television screen, and that the image of the disclosing person occupies at least fifty percent (50%) of the vertical height of the television screen.
- (5) "Political action committee" has the same meaning as "political committee" in G.S. 163-278.6(74), except that "political action committee" does not include any political party, political party organization, or affiliated party committee.
- (6) "Political party organization" means any political party executive committee or any political committee that operates under the direction of a political party executive committee or political party chair, or any affiliated party committee.
- (7) "Print media" means billboards, cards, newspapers, newspaper inserts, magazines, mass mailings, pamphlets, fliers, periodicals, and outdoor advertising facilities.
- (8) "Radio" means any radio broadcast station that is subject to the provisions of 47 U.S.C. §§ 315 and 317.
- (9) "Scan line" means a standard term of measurement used in the electronic media industry calculating a certain area in a television advertisement.
- (10) "Sponsor" means a candidate, candidate committee, political party organization, political action committee, referendum committee, individual, or other entity that purchases an advertisement.
- (11) "Television" means any television broadcast station, cable television system, wireless-cable multipoint distribution system, satellite company, or telephone company transmitting video programming that is subject to the provisions of 47 U.S.C. §§ 315 and 317.
- (12) "Unobscured" means the only printed material that may appear on the television screen is a visual disclosure statement required by law, and nothing is blocking the view of the disclosing person's face. (1999-453, s. 2(a); 2004-203, s. 12(a); 2010-170, s. 7; 2015-66, s. 8(b); 2015-258, s. 3(q); 2015-264, s. 81(f); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.39. Basic disclosure requirements for all political advertisements.**

(a) Basic Requirements. – It shall be unlawful for any sponsor to sponsor an advertisement in the print media or on radio or television that constitutes an expenditure, independent expenditure, electioneering communication, or contribution required to be disclosed under this Article unless all the following conditions are met:

- (1) It bears the legend or includes the statement: "Paid for by \_\_\_\_ [Name of candidate, candidate campaign committee, political party organization, political action committee, referendum committee, individual, or other sponsor]." In television advertisements, this disclosure shall be made by visual legend.
- (2) The name used in the labeling required in subdivision (1) of this subsection is the name that appears on the statement of organization as required in G.S. 163-278.7(b)(1) or G.S. 163-278.12(a).

- (3) In a print media advertisement supporting or opposing the nomination or election of one or more clearly identified candidates, the sponsor states whether it is authorized by a candidate. The visual legend in the advertisement shall state either "Authorized by [name of candidate], candidate for [name of office]" or "Not authorized by a candidate." This subdivision does not apply if the sponsor of the advertisement is the candidate the advertisement supports or that candidate's campaign committee.
- (4) In a print media advertisement that identifies a candidate the sponsor is opposing, the sponsor discloses in the advertisement the name of the candidate who is intended to benefit from the advertisement. This subdivision applies only when the sponsor coordinates or consults about the advertisement or the expenditure for it with the candidate who is intended to benefit.

If an advertisement described in this section is jointly sponsored, the disclosure statement shall name all the sponsors.

(b) Size Requirements. – In a print media advertisement covered by subsection (a) of this section, the height of all disclosure statements required by that subsection shall constitute at least five percent (5%) of the height of the printed space of the advertisement, provided that the type shall in no event be less than 12 points in size. In an advertisement in a newspaper or a newspaper insert, the total height of the disclosure statement need not constitute five percent of the printed space of the advertisement if the type of the disclosure statement is at least 28 points in size. If a single advertisement consists of multiple pages, folds, or faces, the disclosure requirement of this section applies only to one page, fold, or face. In a television advertisement covered by subsection (a) of this section, the visual disclosure legend shall constitute four percent (4%) of vertical picture height in size, and where the television advertisement that appears is paid for by a candidate or candidate campaign committee, the visual disclosure legend shall appear simultaneously with an easily identifiable photograph of the candidate for at least two seconds. In a radio advertisement covered by subsection (a) of this section, the disclosure statement shall last at least two seconds, provided the statement is spoken so that its contents may be easily understood.

(c) Misrepresentation of Authorization. – Notwithstanding G.S. 163-278.27(a), any candidate, candidate campaign committee, political party organization, political action committee, referendum committee, individual, or other sponsor making an advertisement in the print media or on radio or television bearing any legend required by subsection (a) of this section that misrepresents the sponsorship or authorization of the advertisement is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1999-453, s. 2(a); 2001-317, s. 1; 2001-353, s. 5; 2010-170, s. 8; 2013-381, ss. 44.2, 56.1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.39A. Repealed by Session Laws 2013-381, s. 44.1, effective January 1, 2014.**

**§ 163-278.39B. Recodified as G.S. 163-278.38Z by Session Laws 2004-203, s. 12(a), effective August 17, 2004.**

**§ 163-278.39C. Scope of disclosure requirements.**

The disclosure requirements of this Part apply to any sponsor of an advertisement in the print media or on radio or television the cost or value of which constitutes an expenditure or contribution required to be disclosed under this Article, except that the disclosure requirements of this Part:

- (1) Do not apply to an individual who makes uncoordinated independent expenditures aggregating less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) in a political campaign; and
- (2) Do not apply to an individual who incurs expenses with respect to a referendum.

The disclosure requirements of this Part do not apply to any advertisement the expenditure for which is required to be disclosed by G.S. 163-278.12A alone and by no other law. (1999-453, s. 2(a); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

## Part 2. Municipal Campaign Reporting.

### **§ 163-278.40. Definitions.**

When used in this Part, words and phrases have the same meaning as in G.S. 163-278.6, except that:

- (1) The term "board" means the county board of elections; [and]
- (2) The term "city" means any incorporated city, town, or village. (1981, c. 837, s. 3; 1997-515, s. 4(d); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

### **§ 163-278.40A. Organizational report.**

(a) Each candidate and political committee in a city election shall appoint a treasurer and, under verification, report the name and address of the treasurer to the board. A candidate may appoint himself or any other individual, including any relative except his spouse, as his treasurer. If the candidate fails to designate a treasurer, the candidate shall be deemed to have appointed himself as treasurer. A candidate or political committee may remove his or its treasurer.

(b) The organizational report shall state the bank account and number of such campaign fund. Each report required by this Part shall reflect all contributions, expenditures and loans made in behalf of a candidate. The organizational report shall be filed with the county board of elections within 10 days after the candidate files a notice of candidacy with the county board of elections, or within 10 days following the organization of the political committee, whichever occurs first. (1981, c. 837, s. 3; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

### **§ 163-278.40B. Campaign report; partisan election.**

In any city election conducted on a partisan basis in accordance with G.S. 163-279(a)(2) and G.S. 163-291, the following reports shall be filed in addition to the organizational report:

- (1) Thirty-five-day Report. – The treasurer shall file a report with the board 35 days before the primary.
- (2) Pre-primary Report. – The treasurer shall file a report with the board no later than the tenth day preceding each primary election.
- (3) Pre-election Report. – The treasurer shall file a report 10 days before the election, unless a second primary is held and the candidate appeared on the ballot in the second primary, in which case the report shall be filed 10 days before the second primary.
- (4) Semiannual Reports. – If contributions are received or expenditures made during any part of a calendar year, for which no reports are otherwise required by this section, any and all those contributions and expenditures shall be reported on semiannual reports due on the last Friday in July, covering the period through June 30, and due on the last Friday in January, covering the period through December 31 of the previous year. (1981, c. 837, s. 3; 1985, c.

164, s. 2; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1028, s. 7; 2001-419, s. 3; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.40C. Campaign report; nonpartisan election and runoff.**

If any city election conducted under the nonpartisan election and runoff basis in accordance with G.S. 163-279(a)(4) and [G.S.] 163-293, the following reports shall be filed in addition to the organizational report:

- (1) Thirty-five-day Report. – The treasurer shall file a report with the board 35 days before the election.
- (2) Pre-election Report. – The treasurer shall file a report with the board 10 days before the election.
- (3) Pre-runoff Report. – The treasurer shall file a report with the board 10 days before the runoff if the candidate is in a runoff.
- (4) Semiannual Reports. – If contributions are received or expenditures made during any part of a calendar year, for which no reports are otherwise required by this section, any and all those contributions and expenditures shall be reported on semiannual reports due on the last Friday in July, covering the period through June 30, and due on the last Friday in January, covering the period through December 31 of the previous year. (1981, c. 837, s. 3; 1985, c. 164, s. 3; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1028, s. 8; 2001-419, s. 4; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.40D. Campaign report; nonpartisan primary and elections.**

In any city election conducted under the nonpartisan primary method in accordance with G.S. 163-279(a)(3) and G.S. 163-294, the following reports shall be filed in addition to the organizational report:

- (1) Thirty-five-day Report. – The treasurer shall file a report with the board 35 days before the primary if the candidate is in a primary or the same length of time before the election if the candidate is not in a primary.
- (2) Pre-primary and Pre-election Reports. – The treasurer shall file a report 10 days before the primary if the candidate is in a primary and 10 days before the election.
- (3) Semiannual Reports. – If contributions are received or expenditures made during any part of a calendar year, for which no reports are otherwise required by this section, any and all those contributions and expenditures shall be reported on semiannual reports due on the last Friday in July, covering the period through June 30, and due on the last Friday in January, covering the period through December 31 of the previous year. (1981, c. 837, s. 3; 1985, c. 164, s. 4; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1028, s. 9; 2001-419, s. 5; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.40E. Campaign report; nonpartisan plurality.**

In any city election conducted under the nonpartisan plurality method under G.S. 163-279(a)(1) and [G.S.] 163-292, the following reports shall be filed in addition to the organizational report:

- (1) Thirty-five-day Report. – The treasurer shall file a report with the board 35 days before the election.
- (2) Pre-election Report. – The treasurer shall file a report 10 days before the election.
- (3) Semiannual Reports. – If contributions are received or expenditures made during any part of a calendar year, for which no reports are otherwise required by this section, any and all those contributions and expenditures shall be reported on semiannual reports due on the last Friday in July, covering the period through June 30, and due on the last Friday in January, covering the period through December 31 of the previous year. (1981, c. 837, s. 3; 1985, c. 164, s. 5; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1028, s. 10; 2001-419, s. 6; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.40F. Form of report.**

Forms of reports under this Part shall be prescribed by the board. (1981, c. 837, s. 3; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.40G. Content.**

Except as otherwise provided in this Part, each report shall be current within seven days prior to the date the report is due and shall list all contributions received and expenditures made which have not been previously reported. (1981, c. 837, s. 3; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.40H. Notice of reports due.**

The director of the board shall advise, or cause to be advised, no less than five days nor more than 15 days before each report is due each candidate or treasurer whose organizational report has been filed under G.S. 163-278.40A of the specific date each report is due. The director shall immediately notify any individual, candidate, treasurer, or political committee, to file a statement under this Part if:

- (1) It appears that the individual, candidate, treasurer, or political committee has failed to file a statement as required by law or that a statement filed does not conform to this Part; or
- (2) A written complaint is filed under oath with the State Board of Elections by any registered voter of this State alleging that a statement filed with the board does not conform to this Part or to the truth or that an individual, candidate, treasurer, or political committee has failed to file a statement required by this Part. (1981, c. 837, s. 3; 1995, c. 243, s. 1; 2014-111, s. 9; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.40I. Part 1 to apply.**

(a) Except as provided in this Part or in G.S. 163-278.9(c), the provisions of Part 1 shall apply to municipal elections covered by this Part.

(b) G.S. 63-278.7, 163-278.9(a) and (b), 163-278.22(1) and (9), the first paragraph of 163-278.23, 163-278.24, 163-278.26, and 163-278.26 shall not apply to this Part. (1981, c. 837, s. 3; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 163-278.40J. Other committees report by municipal schedule.**

A candidate or political committee that appoints a treasurer under G.S. 163-278.7 shall make reports according to the schedule under this Part if it makes contributions or expenditures concerning municipal elections. (2008-150, s. 9(a); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)