

# Understanding Connecticut Campaign Finance Laws

## A Guide to Financing a Referendum Question



**STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION**  
Revised May 2013







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## I. Introduction

This publication is designed to serve as a guide for *individuals*, groups of two or more individuals, and *preexisting groups* that would like to raise or spend private funds, or use funds in an existing treasury, to advocate for the passage or defeat of any *referendum question* in Connecticut. It also covers how public funds may and may not be used with respect to referendum questions.

A referendum question is a ballot question or a proposal, including a proposal to amend the Connecticut constitution, which is submitted to Connecticut electors or other qualified voters of a Connecticut municipality (or municipalities) for their approval or disapproval. A referendum questions always takes place at a voting machine and is phrased as a “Yes” or “No” question.

Referenda are generally conducted in municipalities and concern local matters such as the budget or a bond authorization. State and local laws also permit referenda to be held within a political subdivision of the state such as a regional school district composed of two or more municipalities. The only statewide referendum questions permitted are those which propose to amend the state constitution or call for a constitutional convention.

[General Statutes §§ [9-1\(n\)](#), [9-369](#) et seq.]

Simply because a referendum may occur sometime in the future does not mean that the laws applicable to referendum questions will necessarily apply to advocacy about a certain issue, especially where the use of public funds is concerned. The referendum must be “**pending**” in order to trigger these laws. A referendum is pending when all of the necessary legal conditions have been satisfied to require the publication of a warning (notice) that a referendum question will be submitted to a vote of the eligible voters of a municipality on a certain date. For example, a referendum may be deemed to be pending when a sufficient number of signatures have been certified by the town clerk under General Statutes § [7-7](#), or when the selectmen (or other authorized municipal official) have determined that a referendum will be conducted and a date has been set, or when the exact wording of the question has been finalized.

**Because these are factual questions, the Commission will generally defer to the town attorney to make the determination of whether a referendum question is pending, until such time as a complaint is filed alleging a violation of the law concerning the referendum. Any questions about whether or when a referendum question is officially pending should thus be directed to your local town attorney.**

Before a referendum is pending, campaign finance law has limited jurisdiction over lobbying with respect to the subject matter that may be related to a potential referendum. Once a referendum is pending, persons spending money on advocacy must pay attention and adhere to the applicable laws.

Connecticut’s campaign finance laws specific to referenda are set forth in [Chapters 152](#) and [155](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes. This Guide focuses on the laws and requirements affecting individuals, groups of individuals, and preexisting groups organized to influence the outcome of a referendum. Spending on referendum advocacy is only moderately regulated by state campaign finance law; however, the



law does provide clear disclosure requirements for raising or spending funds on referenda and may require forming a political committee in certain instances.

Political committees organized for ongoing activities, which may spend funds to affect the outcome of a referendum or referenda, generally fall outside the scope of this Guide. Such political committees are covered by [A Guide for Political Committees](#), available on our website ([www.ct.gov/seec](http://www.ct.gov/seec)). That guide also has more detailed information on the day-to-day functioning of political committees, including *referendum committees*, generally. Guides are also available for candidate committees and party committees.

In addition, Connecticut's election laws generally prohibit the use of *public funds* to influence the outcome of a referendum. When public funds are spent in connection with a referendum question, there must be strict adherence to the provisions set forth in [Chapter 152](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes for the limited expenditure of these monies. [Chapter IV Use of Public Funds](#) of this Guide will discuss these requirements.

## A. Changes in the Law

Copies of the campaign finance laws are available at the State Elections Enforcement Commission's offices and on its website ([www.ct.gov/seec](http://www.ct.gov/seec)).

The laws regarding independent expenditures, including spending on referendum questions, have changed recently. In particular, [Public Act 10-187](#), passed in June, 2010, changed when registration reporting is required and what is necessary to file with either the State Elections Enforcement Commission (the "Commission") or your town clerk when raising or spending money to support or oppose referendum questions. This Guide explains when such filings are necessary.

## B. Changes in this Guide

This Guide incorporates all of the changes made by the General Assembly to [Chapters 152](#) and [155](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes through May 2013. The Guide also offers additional clarification of existing law based on questions received by Commission staff.

In addition, some changes have been made to the format and organization of this Guide. In previous editions, the Guide began with a definitional section of commonly used terms. With this edition, defined terms have been transferred to an expanded Glossary section in the rear of the Guide. Such terms are *italicized* when they first appear in the Guide. We have added more charts and citations to the General Statutes – for your reference – and have tried to keep the text as jargon-free as possible. Overall, the length of the Guide has been shortened.

We wholeheartedly welcome suggestions for future improvements to this Guide from you, the committee chairpersons, treasurers, committee workers, municipal employees, and citizens that are its intended audience. Please remember, the Guide is **not** a substitute for statutes and regulations. Anyone using this Guide should refer to the specific statutory provisions, regulations, declaratory rulings, and advisory opinions of the Commission referenced throughout.



## C. Requesting Compliance Advice

Anyone subject to Connecticut's campaign finance laws may contact the Commission to discuss how the campaign finance provisions apply to them in a particular situation. You may request advice by calling the Commission or by writing to us by U.S. mail or email. PLEASE DO NOT request advice for the SAME QUESTION using more than one of these methods.

**1. Call the Compliance Unit at (860) 256-2940;**

OR

**2. Make a request for written advice.**

You may submit a request for written advice by emailing [seec@ct.gov](mailto:seec@ct.gov) (including "compliance advice" in the subject line) or by sending a letter to:

State Elections Enforcement Commission  
Attn: Compliance Unit  
20 Trinity Street  
Hartford, CT 06106

In your request for advice, please include a complete description of all relevant facts and a specific question. Your request must concern a specific transaction or activity that you plan to undertake or are currently undertaking and intend to continue in the future.

The Commission and/or its staff issue three types of written advice: opinions of counsel, advisory opinions, and declaratory rulings. An **opinion of counsel** is an opinion by Commission staff counsel alone and is not binding on the Commission. The person requesting the opinion of counsel may rely upon the opinion with respect to any matter brought before the Commission based upon the same facts and circumstances addressed in the opinion of counsel. If there is an omission or change in any of the facts or assumptions presented, and such omission, fact or assumption is material to the conclusions presented in the opinion of counsel, then the requestor may not rely on those conclusions in support for such activity brought before the Commission.

When the Commission receives similar questions from various individuals or concludes that the regulated community would best be served by more general, written guidance, the Commission may opt to issue an **advisory opinion**. An advisory opinion is an official Commission statement on a question relating to the application of Connecticut campaign finance law. Unlike an opinion of counsel, upon which only the recipient named in the opinion may rely, the regulated community at large may rely on an advisory opinion, which is voted on and adopted by the Commission.

Finally, the Commission may issue a **declaratory ruling**. A declaratory ruling affords the Commission the opportunity to rule on the validity of any regulation or the applicability to specified circumstances of a provision of the General Statutes, a regulation, or a final decision on a matter within the jurisdiction of the Commission. An individual may petition for a declaratory ruling or the Commission may initiate a proceeding on its own motion. A petition for a declaratory ruling must: (1) state clearly and concisely the



substance and nature of the petition; (2) identify the statute, regulation and/or order which the petition concerns; (3) identify the particular aspect to which the petition is directed; and (4) be accompanied by a statement of any supporting data, facts, and/or arguments that support the petitioner's position. Like an advisory opinion, a declaratory ruling has general applicability.

**The Compliance Unit will NOT respond to requests for oral or written advice concerning:**

**1. The conduct of another individual, committee, group, municipality or municipal subdivision (such as a town council or school district).**

The Compliance Unit may provide you only with advice concerning your own conduct. Complaints about the conduct of another individual, committee, group or municipality should be registered through the complaint process administered by our Enforcement Unit (for more information, see [Chapter VI. Complaints](#)).

**2. Conduct that has already occurred.**

The Compliance Unit may provide you only with advice concerning your current or future conduct.

**3. Issues that are not covered under the campaign finance statutes.**

The Compliance Unit may only provide you with advice concerning [Chapters 155](#) through [157](#) of the General Statutes, portions of [Chapters 152](#) concerning expenditures of public funds on referenda, and General Statutes §§ [9-7a](#) and [9-7b](#), the enabling statutes for the Commission.



## II. Individuals, Preexisting Groups, and Groups of Two or More Individuals

Generally speaking, the law treats individuals, groups of individuals, and preexisting groups wishing to spend on referenda all in different ways. The registration and reporting requirements, as well as the attribution requirements, are different for each.

In some cases, a political committee must be registered. Referendum committees, which are a type of durational political committee, are discussed in the next chapter. This chapter focuses on those that do not need to register a committee but who still need to abide by certain laws.

### A. Registration and Reporting Requirements

Anyone can support or oppose a referendum question, including an elector, a public official, a non-resident, a group of individuals, or a preexisting group. When such persons raise or spend money to support or oppose the question, certain reporting requirements may apply. Whether a filing is required and what types of filings are necessary depends on who is making the expenditure.

#### 1. Who Must File?

##### a. Groups of Two or More Individuals

A group of two or more individuals that does *not* intend to receive or spend more than \$1,000 supporting or opposing a referendum question does not need to register with or report to the Commission or the town clerk.

**Important Note (Law Change):** Groups of two or more individuals who do not raise or spend more than \$1,000 are no longer required to file SEEC Form 6, entitled “Certification of Exemption from Forming a Referendum Committee.” See [Public Act 10-187](#).

If this group later receives or expends in excess of \$1,000, it must then form a political committee. It may form a durational referendum committee which is a type of political committee established to influence a referendum question. To do this, the group must file a [SEEC Form 3](#), entitled “Political Committee (PAC) Registration,” within three business days after exceeding the \$1,000 threshold. It must also file periodic financial disclosure statements. The requirements applicable to referendum committees are discussed in more detail in [Chapter III. Referendum Committees](#).

[General Statutes §§ [9-602\(a\)](#), [9-605\(d\)](#) (as amended by [P.A. 10-187](#)), [9-612\(d\)](#)]

**Important Note:** The \$1,000 “safe harbor” for a group of two or more individuals acting together to raise and spend funds means that such group is not required to register a committee until the \$1,000 trigger is hit. **However, if the group spends any money on written communications, the law requires the group to “claim its speech” by including an attribution, even if the expenditure is small and the group has not raised or spent over \$1,000 in the aggregate,** as more fully described in Section C of this chapter.



## **b. Preexisting Groups Acting Alone to Make Independent Expenditures**

Preexisting groups are entities or informal associations that have an existing bank account that was established for reasons other than the referendum at hand. The funds in the bank account cannot have been raised for the purpose of spending on this particular referendum. Preexisting groups include organizations, businesses both for profit and not for profit, whether organized in Connecticut or any other state, taxpayer groups, and parent-teacher associations.

Preexisting groups that have a prior existence apart from the referendum question may, acting independently, spend without limit from their existing treasury funds to promote the success or defeat of a referendum.

Preexisting groups that spend \$1,000 or less from their existing treasury funds are not required to report as long as they do not raise new funds in connection with the referendum.

As soon as a preexisting group spends over \$1,000 in connection with the referendum or raises new funds, it must report all of its expenditures to date. Preexisting groups spending in excess of \$1,000 on a referendum question register and report using the [SEEC Form 26](#), entitled "Independent Expenditure Statement for an Entity." The [SEEC Form 26](#) serves as both a registration and a disclosure statement. It replaces SEEC Forms 7 and 24.

[General Statutes §§ [9-601\(19\)](#), [9-601c](#), [9-612\(e\)](#), [9-613\(c\)](#), [9-614\(a\)](#)]

## **c. Individuals Acting Alone**

If an *individual* acting alone spends solely his own funds or resources to support or oppose a referendum question independently of any other person or group, then that individual does not need to file any documents with the town clerk or Commission if he or she spends \$1,000 or less in the aggregate. If the individual spends in excess of \$1,000 in the aggregate, the individual must file a financial disclosure statement called the [SEEC Form 22](#), entitled "Independent Expenditures Statement (INDIVIDUALS)." It is highly recommended that such an individual keep track of his spending so he knows when he hits the \$1,000 trigger.

[General Statutes §§ [9-602\(a\)](#), [9-612\(d\)](#)]

### **2. Where to File?**

Most referendum questions are local. If a filing is required, the filing repository is the municipality's town clerk's office, or, if the referendum concerns more than one municipality (such as a regional school district referendum), the town clerk's office of each applicable municipality. The State Elections Enforcement Commission is the filing repository only when the referendum concerns a statewide issue and there is a statewide referendum question.

[General Statutes § [9-603\(a\) and \(b\)](#)]

### **3. When to File?**

#### **a. Initial Statement**

When a preexisting group making independent expenditures or an individual spends in excess of \$1,000 in the aggregate on referendum expenditures, the responsible agent



must file a financial disclosure statement on the next regular filing date for committees, which will be one of the following dates:

- The date a quarterly statement is due by committees (the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January, April, July, and October);
- The 7<sup>th</sup> day prior to the date on which the referendum or ballot question is to be voted; or
- A date after the referendum (January 10<sup>th</sup> if the referendum is held in conjunction with the November regular election; if it is held any other time, then individuals must file 45 days after the date of the referendum while preexisting groups must file 90 days after the date of the referendum – if the deadline for a quarterly statement occurs before the 45/90 day date, then the preexisting group or individual will file the quarterly statement for this filing).

Which filing dates applies depends on when the expenditure was made relative to the date of the referendum.

#### **b. Additional Statements, if Any**

In addition to this initial statement, the agent must file a statement for each additional expenditure made or obligated to be made on the next regular filing date for committees. Thus, once the individual or preexisting group exceeds \$1,000 and files a statement, filings should continue according to the filing schedule until all expenditures, actual or incurred, are disclosed. The individual or group is only required to file a statement if an expenditure was made in the period covered by that statement. If the individual or group only makes a single expenditure, then only one statement will be required to be filed.

**Example:** On March 15, Sam spends \$1,200 on a newspaper advertisement advocating the defeat of an April 30 referendum question. Sam's first [SEEC Form 22](#) will be the April quarterly filing, due April 10 and covering the period from March 15 (the date of the expenditure) through March 31. Since he makes no other expenditures, this will be the only report he is required to file.

The statement is required to cover a certain period of time based on the type of statement being filed. In all cases, the filing period begins on the last day covered by any previous filing or, if there have been no prior filings, on the date of the expenditure. If filing a quarterly statement or a statement due 45 days after the referendum, the period ends on the last day of the month preceding the month that the filing is due. For filings to be made on the 7<sup>th</sup> day prior to the referendum, the period ends on the 9<sup>th</sup> day prior to the referendum. Filings due 90 days after the referendum must cover through the 7<sup>th</sup> day before the filing is due.

If the deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, the statement must be filed on the next business day. This filing must be submitted at some time during the filing period, which begins on the day after the last day of the period to be reported and ends on the filing deadline date.



**Example:** A referendum is taking place on July 25. The Trust for Public Land (a preexisting group) spends \$1,200 on April 25 on lawn signs in support of the referendum. It must therefore file a "July 10" report on or before July 10, covering the period of April 25 through June 30.

The committee then spends \$300 on an advertisement on July 15. It is therefore required to file a "7<sup>th</sup> day preceding referendum" report on July 18, covering the period of July 1 through July 16.

The Trust makes a final expenditure of \$10 one day before the referendum, on July 24. It must therefore file an "October 10" report on or before October 10, covering the period of July 17 through September 30. Once the Trust files the October 10 statement, it has no further reporting requirements – all expenditures have been reported.

If the committee's filing repository is the **town clerk**, then statements are considered **timely** filed if they are either postmarked by the United States Postal Service before midnight on or before the required filing deadline date or delivered by hand to the town clerk by 4:30 p.m. on or before the required filing deadline date. Please note that town clerks are not currently equipped to accept electronically filed statements.

**Important Note:** Some town clerk's offices may not have office hours or may have shortened office hours on a filing deadline day. This does not relieve the treasurer of filing by the deadline, so be sure to confirm the office hours of the town clerk if delivery by hand is anticipated.

If the committee's filing repository is the **State Elections Enforcement Commission**, then statements are considered **timely** filed if they are **received by** the Commission's offices by 5:00 p.m. on or before the filing deadline date if delivered by the United States Postal Service, courier service, parcel service or hand delivery.

**Important Note:** Effective January 1, 2012, filings sent to the Commission by mail are no longer considered timely if postmarked by the filing deadline date – **they must actually be received by the Commission's offices by 5:00 p.m. on the filing deadline date in order to be deemed timely**. Individuals or groups seeking confirmation of receipt by the Commission should check their filing status on [eCRIS](#). See [Public Act 11-48](#).

[General Statutes §§ [1-2a](#), [9-605\(b\)](#), [9-608\(a\)](#), [\(d\)](#), and [\(e\)](#) (as amended by [P.A. 11-48](#)), [9-612\(d\)](#) and [\(e\)](#)]

#### 4. Late Filing Fees

If an individual or preexisting group making independent expenditures in connection with a referendum fails to file a timely financial disclosure statement for an expenditure which promotes a position on a referendum, the individual or group shall be a subject to a civil penalty, imposed by the Commission, of up to \$2,000. If any such failure is knowing and willful, the individual responsible for the failure shall also be fined up to \$5,000 or imprisoned for not more than five years, or both.

[General Statutes §§ [9-7b](#), [9-623\(a\)](#)]



## B. Contributions to Referendum Committees

Individuals may make unlimited contributions to referendum committees.

Preexisting groups may make contributions directly to referendum committees in an amount equal to ten cents per resident of the political subdivision in which the referendum takes place. These amounts are calculated for towns based on the decennial census and are listed in [Appendix A](#) of this Guide.

Groups of two or more individuals may also make contributions directly to referendum committees in an amount equal to ten cents per resident without forming a political committee, unless they spend or receive over \$1,000 in the aggregate. If they are in excess of \$1,000, then they must form a committee. For more information on forming a referendum committee, please see [Chapter III. Referendum Committees](#).

[General Statutes §§ [9-602\(a\)](#), [9-612\(d\)](#), [9-620](#) (as amended by [P. A. 10-187](#))]

## C. Attribution Requirements

Connecticut's attribution laws require that certain communications that promote the success or defeat of a referendum question contain language that identifies who paid for the communication. The requirements vary depending on who paid for the communication.

An individual acting alone who pays for communications has no attribution requirements.

Any business entity, organization, labor union, association, or other preexisting group, and any group of two or more individuals organized for a referendum (that does not spend or receive over \$1,000 and therefore does not need to form a referendum committee) that finances any written, typed, or other printed communication that promotes the success or defeat of a referendum question must include on the face of it the words "**Paid for by**" together with the following:

1. In the case of a business entity, organization, association or other preexisting group, the name of the business entity, organization, association or group and the name of its chief executive officer or equivalent;
2. In the case of a group of two or more individuals, the name of the group and the name and address of its agent.

The term "*written, typed or other printed communication*" includes letters, brochures, circulars, billboards, transit advertisements, newspaper advertisements and similar communications, as well as campaign signs that are greater than 32 square feet in surface area.

**Important Note:** An individual who is acting strictly alone in producing and financing a communication that promotes the success or defeat of a referendum question is not required to include an attribution on the communication.

Attributions for political communications are not required for "political paraphernalia." Also exempt are signs that have a surface area of 32 square feet or less (e.g. most lawn signs) and banners.

[General Statutes § [9-621\(c\)\(1\)](#)]



### III. Referendum Committees

A referendum committee is a type of political committee. Its sole purpose is to influence the outcome of a specific referendum and it must terminate after the referendum has been held by filing a final (termination) disclosure statement.

Any group of two or more individuals that raises or spends in excess of \$1,000 for referendum advocacy must register a referendum committee and file financial disclosure statements accordingly.

**Important Note:** A referendum committee is durational, ending with the referendum. Spending on referendum may also be done through a political committee established on an ongoing basis to influence referenda (from year to year). This is not a referendum committee as that term is used in Connecticut campaign finance law. Different rules apply to such ongoing political committees. Consult the Commission's [A Guide for Political Committees](#) for more information.

Note that if a corporation, business entity, labor union, organization or other association has already established an ongoing political committee, it may **not** register a second political committee but may use its existing political committee if it intends to receive contributions in connection with its spending on referenda (See "**One Person One PAC**" Rule later in this chapter). In such a case, different contribution limits would apply than the ones described in this Guide.

[General Statutes §§ [9-602\(a\)](#), [9-605\(e\)\(1\)](#), [9-613\(a\)](#), [9-614\(a\)](#)]

#### A. Responsibilities of the Chairperson

##### 1. Registers the Committee

When a group of two or more individuals receives or expends more than \$1,000, the group must form a referendum committee by filing a [SEEC Form 3](#), entitled "Political Committee (PAC) Registration," within three business days after the \$1,000 threshold is crossed. The group may certainly form a referendum committee *before* it receives or spends \$1,000—and it should do so if it *intends* to raise or spend in excess of \$1,000.

The [SEEC Form 3](#) must be accompanied by a [SEEC Form 20](#), disclosing the group's expenditures and contributions. Note that a referendum committee which has not received any contributions before registering will not file a [SEEC Form 20](#) upon registration but is required to file one within 48 hours of receiving its first contribution.

Any additions or revisions to a registration statement (e.g. a change in treasurer) must be made by submitting an amended registration statement to the same filing repository where the initial registration statement was filed not later than ten days after the addition or revision. The committee must be sure to keep the contact information of its officers up-to-date on the registration statement.

[General Statutes §§ [9-602\(a\)](#), [9-605\(b\) and \(c\)](#), [9-610\(e\), \(f\), \(g\) and \(h\)](#)]

##### 2. Designates a Depository Institution

The committee's registration statement ([SEEC Form 3](#)) must contain the name and address of a single depository institution located in Connecticut. The committee must deposit all committee funds into a single checking account established within the



designated depository institution and the treasurer may only make expenditures from this one account.

[General Statutes §§ [9-602\(a\)](#), [9-605\(b\)](#), [9-607\(e\)](#); [Advisory Opinion 1975-6](#)]

### 3. Appoints the Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer

The committee chairperson must appoint one individual, who is a Connecticut elector (registered voter), as treasurer and may similarly appoint another Connecticut elector as deputy treasurer. Ideally, each committee should have a deputy treasurer who can deposit funds and make or authorize expenditures and other committee payments if the treasurer is unavailable.

These appointments must appear on the most current registration statement ([SEEC Form 3](#)). The treasurer and deputy treasurer (if applicable) must co-sign the registration statement filed by the chairperson, signifying their acceptance of the appointment. Once appointed, the treasurer and deputy treasurer (if applicable) serve until the committee terminates.

The campaign treasurer (or deputy treasurer if the treasurer is unavailable) is solely responsible for receiving, depositing, and expending funds, for filing financial disclosure statements with the proper filing repository, and for keeping internal records of all transactions, as more fully discussed later in this chapter.

[General Statutes §§ [9-602\(a\) and \(c\)](#), [9-605\(a\)](#), [9-606\(d\)](#), [9-607\(a\) and \(d\)](#)]

### 4. Resignation and Replacement of a Treasurer

During the life of a referendum committee, its treasurer may resign, be replaced, or otherwise become incapacitated. If the treasurer wishes to resign, a written statement of resignation must be filed with the appropriate filing repository in order to relieve the treasurer from his or her statutory obligations under the campaign finance laws.

Upon the treasurer's resignation, replacement or permanent incapacity, the deputy treasurer, if any, automatically succeeds as "acting" treasurer until a new treasurer is appointed. Where no deputy treasurer has been appointed, the failure to designate a successor treasurer within ten days of the resignation or incapacity is a violation of General Statutes § [9-602\(c\)](#), for which a fine may be imposed against the committee chairperson. Regardless of whether a deputy treasurer has been appointed, it is strongly recommended that the committee chairperson designate a successor treasurer to fill the vacancy by filing an amended [SEEC Form 3](#) with the appropriate filing repository within the ten days.

A political committee may **not** receive any *contributions* or make or incur any expenditures during the period in which the committee is without a treasurer or deputy treasurer. A committee chairperson is legally liable for any such violation and subject to a maximum civil penalty of \$2,000 per violation.



**Important Note:** A committee treasurer wishing to resign must submit a written statement of resignation with the appropriate filing repository (the town clerk or the Commission). Until such resignation statement is received by the appropriate filing repository (or until the committee chairperson files an amended registration designating a new treasurer), the individual is still considered a treasurer under the campaign finance laws and is responsible for all filings and other duties of the treasurer. This means that even if the treasurer resigns internally (i.e. tells the chairperson), he is still legally the treasurer until he submits a written resignation to the filing repository or the chairperson designates a new treasurer by submitting an amended registration statement.

[General Statutes §§ [9-7b](#), [9-602\(a\)](#) and [\(c\)](#)]

### **5. Who May Not be Treasurer or Deputy Treasurer**

An individual who is not a Connecticut elector may not serve as treasurer or deputy treasurer.

[General Statutes § [9-606\(d\)](#)]

### **6. "One Person One PAC" Rule**

In addition to the above limitations, no individual may establish or control more than one political committee.

Two key factors, among many, that could demonstrate that an individual has established or exercises control of a political committee include:

1. serving as chairperson, treasurer or deputy treasurer of the committee; and
2. making the initial contribution to the committee.

Note that this prohibition does not extend to party committees and candidate committees. Accordingly, an individual may serve as the treasurer of both a political committee and a party committee or candidate committee under the law. Also note that there is an exception to this rule for legislative leadership and legislative caucus committees, meaning that a person can control a legislative leadership or caucus committee and also control another political committee, including a referendum committee.

A business entity, labor organization, or other person may only establish or control a single political committee. To ensure compliance with this limitation, the business entity, labor organization or other person establishing or controlling a political committee must disclose this affiliation on the committee's registration statement ([SEEC Form 3](#)).

[General Statutes §§ [9-605\(e\)\(1\)](#), [9-613\(a\)](#), [9-614\(a\)](#)]

## **B. Responsibilities of the Treasurer**

### **1. Makes and Authorizes Expenditures**

Only a committee's designated treasurer (or deputy treasurer, when necessary) may authorize and make expenditures on the committee's behalf. All committee expenditures must, generally speaking, be made by check or debit card drawn on the



committee's checking account or by the committee's credit card. Committee checks must contain the committee's name and address, as well as the name of the committee's treasurer.

If the committee has a credit card, the treasurer and deputy treasurer, if applicable, are generally the only individuals who are authorized cardholders. The treasurer may, however, allow the chairperson or a committee worker to be an authorized cardholder of a credit card issued to the committee, provided that the individual's expenditures are: (1) for goods or services that are pre-authorized by the treasurer; and (2) for a lawful purpose of the committee. The treasurer should be particularly careful in opting to authorize a committee worker as an authorized cardholder as such authorization will mean that all expenditures made by the cardholder on that credit card will be deemed to have been authorized by the treasurer, even if the cardholder failed to obtain actual authorization for the particular expenditure in question. A committee worker may only be an authorized holder of a committee credit card, which is paid on a periodic basis.

A debit card, which draws directly from the committee checking account, is treated differently under the law. Debit cards may **only** be used by the treasurer (or deputy treasurer, when necessary).

Effective July 1, 2011, committees may pay for advertising from a community antenna television company using a bank or cashier's check if the contract with the company so requires and the treasurer maintains documentation substantiating that the funds used to pay for such advertising space were expended from committee funds.

[General Statutes § [9-607\(a\), \(d\), \(e\), \(g\)\(2\)\(O\), \(j\) and \(l\)](#) (as amended by [P.A. 11-48](#))]

## **2. Deposits All Monetary Receipts**

The committee's treasurer is responsible for depositing all funds received by the committee within fourteen days of receipt.

The treasurer must ensure that any funds or resources received by the committee are lawful and within the aggregate limits permitted under campaign finance law. The treasurer should not deposit any receipt which is either prohibited or otherwise exceeds the permissible limits set forth by law. Instead, the treasurer should return it to the donor within fourteen days of receipt or by the filing deadline for transactions falling within the reporting period, whichever is earlier.

If the treasurer deposits a monetary receipt that is later deemed impermissible, the treasurer must report it on the financial disclosure statement ([SEEC Form 20](#)) and refund the same without delay by returning the amount to the donor using a check drawn on the committee's checking account. The treasurer should report any such refund as an expenditure using the Expenditure Code "REF" for "refund" with a description "refund of contribution" on the financial disclosure statement corresponding with the period that the refund is made. Wherever possible, such refunds should be made in the same reporting period during which the funds were deposited. The same rules apply to non-monetary receipts that are from an improper source or in excess of the relevant contribution limits.

[General Statutes §§ [9-606\(a\)](#), [9-607\(g\)\(2\)\(R\)](#), [9-608\(c\)](#)]



### 3. Retains All Records and Receipts

The treasurer must retain internal records to substantiate all expenditures made by the committee as permissible. Examples of expenditure records include, but are not limited to:

- bank statements
- cancelled checks
- bills
- travel itineraries
- invoices
- cash register receipts
- credit card and debit card slips and statements
- written receipts supporting any requests for reimbursement
- copies of ad books for fundraising affairs
- copies of fundraiser tickets
- copies of invitations
- solicitor appointments
- copies of checks
- compensation agreements
- documents describing expenditures incurred but not yet paid
- loan agreements
- copies of printed advertisements (flyers, postcards, etc.)

These internal records must be kept for four years from the date of the financial disclosure statement in which the transactions were entered.

[General Statutes §§ [9-606\(a\)](#), [9-607\(f\)](#), [9-608\(c\)\(1\)](#)]

There are two recordkeeping requirements under the law that are worth highlighting.

First, in all instances where the committee agrees to pay someone more than \$100 for his or her work or services, there must be a **written agreement** entered with the individual, signed **before** any such work or service commences, which sets forth (1) the nature and the duration of the fee arrangement; and (2) a description of the scope of the work to be performed or services to be rendered. The treasurer must also maintain contemporaneous records and/or invoices detailing the actual work performed or services rendered.

[Regs., Conn. State Agencies § [9-607-1](#)]

Second, the treasurer is required to keep an internal list of all individuals he or she appoints as **solicitors** for the committee, as discussed more fully below.

### 4. Files Periodic Financial Disclosure Statements

The treasurer is also obligated to file all financial disclosure statements on behalf of the committee. For more information on how and when to submit financial disclosure statements, see Section E of this chapter.

[General Statutes § [9-608\(a\)](#)]

### 5. Appoints and Oversees Solicitors

The only individuals who may receive monetary and non-monetary contributions and donations on behalf of the committee are the treasurer, deputy treasurer, and any appointed *solicitors*. Anyone other than the treasurer or deputy treasurer who receives



funds must be appointed as a solicitor by the treasurer. The treasurer may appoint as many solicitors as needed. The treasurer should keep an accurate list of the name and address of each individual who is appointed to serve as a solicitor. Although the names of solicitors need not be disclosed on the committee's financial disclosure statements, the law requires that the treasurer keep internal records, outlining each solicitor appointment and the term of appointment, which may be subject to audit.

A solicitor may never deposit committee funds; **only the treasurer may deposit funds received by the committee**. Within seven days of the receipt of any goods, funds or contributions, the solicitor must deliver the same to the treasurer. The treasurer must deposit funds within fourteen days of her receipt from the solicitor, or return impermissible contributions to the contributor(s). A solicitor may not expend funds that he receives and must deliver them to the treasurer in the form in which they were received (e.g. if a contributor provided a cash contribution, that contribution must be delivered in its same cash form to the committee's treasurer).

No later than one day prior to the treasurer's required filing date, each solicitor must submit to the treasurer a list of the contributor information (names, addresses, and all other required information) of all persons from whom or from which the solicitor collected monetary and/or non-monetary receipts on behalf of the committee. The treasurer must oversee committee solicitors, ensuring that they turn over this list, as well as all contributions received, in a timely manner. The treasurer is responsible for training solicitors and ensuring they are complying with the law.

No person may solicit contributions that are prohibited by law.

[General Statutes §§ [9-606\(c\)](#), [9-622\(10\)](#)]

Municipal employees may not solicit funds for the benefit of a political committee from an individual under their supervision or that individual's spouse or dependent children.

[General Statutes § [9-622\(12\)](#)]

## C. Raising Funds for Your Committee

A referendum committee may raise funds by collecting contributions from individuals, other committees, and preexisting groups, subject to certain limitations discussed below. While contributions are often monetary in form, they may take other forms as well. In addition to contributions which are subject to limits on the amount that may be given, there are other types of funds or things a committee may receive that do not count toward the committee's contribution limits. These few categories are narrowly defined. In most instances, these receipts or "donations" remain reportable. These non-contributions are discussed in greater detail in the Commission's [A Guide for Political Committees](#).

### 1. Permissible Contributions

Contributions from an individual eighteen years of age and over may be accepted without limit. Contributions from individuals less than eighteen may be accepted to a maximum of \$30 in the calendar year.

[General Statutes §§ [9-611\(e\)](#), [9-612\(d\)](#)]



Contributions from a political committee established by a business entity may be accepted to a maximum of \$2,000 per calendar year. However, the donor political committee must be a registered Connecticut political committee.

[General Statutes § [9-613\(e\)](#)]

Contributions from an ongoing political committee established by two or more individuals may be accepted to a maximum of \$2,000 per calendar year. The donor political committee must be a registered Connecticut political committee.

[General Statutes § [9-618\(a\)](#)]

Contributions from a political committee established by an organization (a labor union) may be accepted without limit. The donor political committee must be a registered Connecticut political committee.

[General Statutes § [9-615\(b\)](#)]

Contributions from a political committee established for a single primary or election may be accepted to a maximum of \$2,000 for the life of the referendum committee. However, the donor political committee must be a registered Connecticut political committee.

[General Statutes § [9-619\(a\)](#)]

Contributions from a party committee (state central or town committee) may be accepted without limit. The donor party committee must be a registered Connecticut party committee.

[General Statutes § [9-617](#)]

Contributions may be accepted from business entities, labor unions and other organizations and associations, which have an existence irrespective of and prior to the time the referendum was pending, up to a maximum of ten cents per individual residing in the political subdivision holding the referendum, which is based upon population figures established by the last federal decennial census. See [Appendix A](#).

[General Statutes § [9-620\(c\)](#)]

## **2. Impermissible Contributions**

A political committee established solely for a referendum question may *not* contribute to another referendum committee.

[General Statutes § [9-620\(a\)](#)]

Candidate committees, exploratory committees or slate committees may not contribute to a referendum committee, nor may they distribute their surplus to a referendum committee.

[General Statutes §§ [9-608\(e\) and \(f\)](#), [9-616\(a\)](#)]

Contributions may not be accepted from a national or out of state political or party committee or a committee of a candidate for federal or an out-of-state office.

[General Statutes § [9-620\(b\)](#)]



## Contributions to a Referendum Committee Aggregate Contribution Limits

Contributor Sources <sup>a</sup>	Received by Referendum Committee
Individual <sup>b</sup>	Unlimited
Party Committee	Unlimited
Candidate, Exploratory, or Political Slate Committee	Prohibited
Ongoing Political Committee established by two or more Individuals	\$ 2,000/yr
Ongoing Political Committee established by a Business Entity	\$ 2,000/yr
Ongoing Political Committee established by an Organization (Labor Union)	Unlimited
Another Referendum Committee	Prohibited
Political Committee established for a Single Primary or Election	\$ 2,000
National Committee, Out-of-State Political, Candidate or Party Committee	Prohibited
Business Entities, Associations, Labor Unions and other Organizations	10¢ per resident <sup>c</sup> for life of committee

- a. Only contributions from committees registered in Connecticut may be accepted.
- b. Individuals who are under 18 years of age may only contribute up to \$30 per calendar year.
- c. This limit is based upon population figures established by the 2010 federal decennial census of the political subdivision holding the referendum. Please see [Appendix A](#).



### 3. "In-Kind" Contributions

The above-mentioned contribution limits and prohibitions apply to all contributions, whether monetary or in-kind. An in-kind contribution is the donation of goods, services or anything of value given free of charge or at a discount, i.e. at less than the usual and normal charge to the recipient committee. An in-kind contribution is valued at the usual and normal charge less any amount paid by the recipient committee and must be disclosed in Section M, "In-Kind Contributions," of the committee's financial disclosure statement ([SEEC Form 20](#)).

Uncompensated services provided by an individual who **volunteers** his or her personal time to a committee are *not* an in-kind contribution and need not be reported. However, services that are provided by an individual for which that individual receives compensation from another committee, individual, or any preexisting group, must be reported as an in-kind contribution, and are subject to source and amount restrictions. If an individual provides his services at a discount not available to all others on the same terms, the amount of the discount is a contribution. Moreover, if the volunteer provides things of value to the committee as part of his volunteer service that are not otherwise exempt from the definition of contribution, he must either be reimbursed for such items or the committee may report the items as an in-kind contribution, if within the appropriate limits.

**Example of an In-Kind Contribution in Connection with Volunteer Services:** Susan enjoys designing websites and has decided to volunteer her personal time and services to create and maintain a website for XYZ referendum committee, using her own personal computer. However, the cost of hosting the committee website and purchasing a domain name will total \$100. While Susan is permitted to use her own personal computer and provide her personal time and computer skills as part of her volunteer services, either the committee must reimburse her for the \$100 cost of the site hosting and domain name or that cost must be reported as an in-kind contribution from her to the referendum committee.

### 4. Loans as Contributions

All loans, except those made by a bank in the ordinary course of business, are considered contributions, and the lender is subject to any limits on contributions to the committee. The amount of the contribution is equivalent to the principal amount of the outstanding loan. An unpaid loan, when added to other contributions from the same donor, may not exceed the contribution limit applicable to that donor. Repayments made on the loan reduce the amount of the contribution. Once repaid in full, a loan no longer counts against the donor's contribution limit (if any). The committee treasurer and the individual or entity making the loan must execute a **written agreement**, and the treasurer must retain a copy of the agreement for the same period as other internal records.

[General Statutes §§ [9-601a\(a\)\(1\) and \(b\)\(1\)](#), [9-608\(c\)\(1\)\(E\)](#)]



## 5. Form of Contributions

### a. Cash or Check

Monetary contributions from **individuals** may not be accepted unless the following methods of payments are used:

- The first \$100 contributed in the aggregate may be made by cash, personal check, bank instrument or credit card.
- Once the individual has contributed \$100 in the aggregate, any remaining monetary contribution may only be made by personal check or credit card.

**Example:** Charles gave a \$100 check to a referendum committee in April. The following month, Charles attends a fundraising event for the same committee and wants to contribute \$10. This \$10 is also considered a contribution to the referendum committee. Since Charles has already given \$100 to the referendum committee, however, he must pay the \$10 by either check or credit card – he may not use cash.

[General Statutes §§ [9-611\(d\)](#), [9-622\(9\)](#)]

Monetary receipts from any other **committee** that may contribute to the referendum committee must be made by check drawn on the committee's designated depository institution.

Referendum committees may not accept an anonymous contribution in any amount. Anonymous contributions include funds for which the contributor cannot be determined by any means. An anonymous cash receipt must be immediately forwarded by the committee's treasurer in full to the State Elections Enforcement Commission for deposit in the General Fund of the State of Connecticut.

[General Statutes § [9-606\(b\)](#) (as amended by [P.A. 11-48](#))]

### b. Credit Cards

Referendum committees wishing to receive contributions by credit card should review the section on credit card contributions in the Commission's [A Guide for Political Committees](#).

## 6. Other Types of Receipts

There are some other types of receipts that a referendum committee may accept that do not constitute contributions, such as the donation of personal property by an individual for a committee fundraiser up to a specified value and the donation of certain goods or services by a business entity up to a specified value. For more information on these types of receipts, please see Section B of Chapter IV of the Commission's [A Guide for Political Committees](#).

## D. Spending Committee Funds

Spending by referendum committees must be for the committee's lawful purpose, as discussed more fully below. There are also additional guidelines for spending as well as certain prohibitions of which treasurers and deputy treasurers should be aware.



## 1. Permissible Expenditures

All expenditures by the committee must be made to promote its “lawful purpose.” For a referendum committee, this means expenditures for administering the committee (overhead and operating expenses) and promoting the success or defeat of a referendum or ballot question. Expenditures made to solicit contributions for the committee or to raise funds for the committee are also lawful.

Permissible expenses include but are not limited to the rental of real and personal property, the purchase of computer other electronic equipment, professional services, office supplies, utility costs, printing, postage, photocopying, compensation of committee staff, and advertising.

A referendum committee may make such expenditures jointly with another committee if both committees are benefiting from the permissible expenditure and each pays its proportional share of the associated cost.

**Important Note:** Where two committees are making joint expenditures (such as for a joint event or advertisement), the treasurers of both committees must approve the expenditures beforehand and must each maintain documentation of the underlying expenditures. It is best to have a written agreement in place beforehand outlining how the underlying expenditures will be paid, which should be based on each committee’s proportional share of the associated costs.

[General Statutes § [9-607\(g\)](#)]

### a. Committee Worker Reimbursements

The committee may reimburse a committee worker if:

1. the worker has paid the expense from his or her own personal funds or personal credit card;
2. the treasurer authorized the expenditure;
3. the worker provides the treasurer with a written receipt from the vendor proving payment by the worker;
4. the expenditure is for a lawful purpose of the committee; and
5. the expenditure is not a contribution to any other committee.

When a committee worker uses personal funds to make authorized expenditures on behalf of the committee and seeks reimbursement, the payment made by the worker will be deemed a contribution to the committee unless the committee reimburses the worker within a reasonable time. Previously, the Commission has determined that 45 days from the date an expenditure was made or incurred would satisfy this reasonableness test.

[General Statutes § [9-607\(g\)\(2\)\(O\)](#)]

### b. Petty Cash Funds

The treasurer of a referendum committee is permitted to establish a single petty cash fund by drawing a check on the committee’s account in an amount which may not exceed \$100. The treasurer reports the check as being made out to “cash” in Section P, “Expenses Paid by Committee,” of the [SEEC Form 20](#). The treasurer may replenish the



petty cash fund from time to time, provided that the total balance of the fund may never exceed \$100, and provided further that the fund is not replenished more than twice in any seven day period.

Expenditures made from a petty cash fund are limited to \$25 per transaction (e.g., purchase of supplies for the committee). The treasurer must maintain a written account of all petty cash expenditure disbursements and internal records documenting how the money was spent (e.g., copies of receipts).

The committee treasurer reports any petty cash returned in Section K, "Miscellaneous Monetary Receipts not Considered Contributions," of the [SEEC Form 20](#).

[General Statutes § [9-607\(e\)](#); Regs., Conn. State Agencies § [9-333i-1](#)]

### **c. Attribution Requirements**

A referendum committee may spend funds on communications to support the success or defeat of a referendum question, though certain attribution requirements apply.

Any referendum committee which finances any written, typed, or other printed communication which promotes the success or defeat of a referendum question must include on the face of it the words "**Paid for by**" together with the name of the committee and the name of its treasurer.

The term "*written, typed or other printed communication*" includes letters, brochures, circulars, billboards, transit advertisements, newspaper advertisements and similar communications, as well as campaign signs that are greater than 32 square feet in surface area.

Attributions for political communications are not required for "political paraphernalia." Also exempt are signs which have a surface area of 32 square feet or less (e.g. most lawn signs) and banners.

[General Statutes § [9-621](#)]

### **d. Contributions to the Citizens' Election Fund**

A referendum committee may donate funds in any amount to the Citizens' Election Fund.

[General Statutes § [9-751](#)]

## **2. Impermissible Expenditures**

### **a. Contributions to Other Committees**

A referendum committee may not make contributions to or for the benefit of a candidate committee, a political committee (including another referendum committee), a party committee, a national committee or a committee of a candidate for federal or out of state office. Upon dissolution, however, referendum committees are able to distribute their surplus to certain other committees, which is discussed later in this Guide.

[General Statutes § [9-620\(a\)](#)]

### **b. Personal Use**

No goods, services, funds or contributions received by a referendum committee may be made available for the personal use of any individual. Expenditures for "personal



use” include expenditures to defray the normal living expenses of any individual. Expenditures for personal use are those that have no direct connection with, or effect upon, the referendum committee. Examples of such expenditures include rent or mortgage payments for residential or business purposes, clothing, shoes, groceries, and personal subscriptions. This prohibition is not applicable to reimbursements to committee workers for goods and services purchased by them for committee purposes.

[General Statutes § [9-607\(g\)\(2\)\(L\) and \(4\)](#)]

### c. Prohibition on Gifts, Compensation and Honoraria to Elected Officials

Committee funds or resources may not be used to provide an honorarium to compensate, or make a gift to, an elected public official for a speaking engagement or other service rendered on behalf of the committee unless they are reimbursements for the elected official’s actual travel expenses to make the speech or perform the service, or for food and beverage consumed by the public official or members of the public official’s immediate family at the speaking engagement.

[General Statutes § [9-607\(h\)](#)]

## E. Reporting Information

### 1. Who Reports?

The treasurer or, upon the treasurer’s absence or inability, the deputy treasurer, is required to file all financial disclosure statements.

[General Statutes §§ [9-601\(13\)](#), [9-608\(a\)](#)]

### 2. How and Where to Report?

The [SEEC Form 20](#) “Itemized Campaign Finance Disclosure Statement” or, if applicable, the [SEEC Form 21](#) “Short Form Finance Disclosure Statement,” must be filed with the filing repository with which the committee is registered (i.e. the town clerk or the State Elections Enforcement Commission). For more information on the appropriate repository, see Section A. The Role of the Committee Chairperson of this chapter.

A referendum committee need not file a [SEEC Form 20](#) unless and until it receives or expends in excess of \$1,000 for purposes of the referendum for which such committee was formed. If it never reaches this threshold, it may file a [SEEC Form 21](#) throughout its duration. If it exceeds the \$1,000 threshold, it is required to file the [SEEC Form 20](#) and must continue to use the [SEEC Form 20](#) for all of the committee’s remaining required financial disclosure statements. The first [SEEC Form 20](#) must include **all** of the reportable financial transactions which have occurred since inception.

[General Statutes § [9-608\(b\)](#)]

**Example:** A referendum committee is formed on January 1 but does not raise or spend more than \$1,000 between January 1 and March 31. The treasurer files a [SEEC Form 21](#) (Short Form) for the April 10<sup>th</sup> filing. By June 30, the committee exceeds the \$1,000 threshold, requiring the treasurer to file the [SEEC Form 20](#) for the July 10<sup>th</sup> filing, covering **all** financial activity between January 1 and June 30. The committee must file all subsequent reports using the [SEEC Form 20](#).



### 3. What Information Must Be Reported?

All monetary receipts, whether or not such receipts are considered contributions, must be reported in the period received, as well as all non-monetary receipts that are considered contributions (i.e. in-kind contributions). Non-monetary receipts received in connection with a fundraising affair, whether or not they constitute contributions, and expenditures made or incurred by the committee must also be reported on the financial disclosure statement.

When a treasurer would like to incorporate computer spreadsheets or forms, or other schedules or attachments as part of the committee's filings, the treasurer must duplicate the section headings and all of the data elements that appear in [SEEC Form 20](#). All sections are discussed in detail in the instructions to the [SEEC Form 20](#).

[General Statutes § [9-608\(c\)](#)]

#### a. Reporting Receipts

##### i. *Contributions from Individuals*

Monetary contributions received from an individual that are \$50 or less in the aggregate since the referendum committee's inception do not require disclosure of the contributor's name and address and can be reported in Section A entitled "Total Contributions From Small Contributors – This Period Only." However, the treasurer must still keep an internal record of the contributor's name and address so that the contribution can be aggregated with any other contributions that the individual has made or will make to the committee. To assist with recordkeeping and compliance with the required aggregation, the treasurer may also choose to itemize contributions that are \$50 or less in Section B entitled "Itemized Contributions from Individuals."

All monetary contributions in excess of \$50 must be itemized in Section B. Moreover, when monetary contributions exceed \$50 in the aggregate since inception from an individual who was previously reported as a small contributor in Section A, the contributor must be itemized in Section B on the next scheduled statement.

All non-monetary contributions are to be itemized as in-kind contributions in Section M of [SEEC Form 20](#), regardless of amount.

[General Statutes § [9-608\(c\)\(1\) and \(4\)](#)]

Monetary contributions received from an individual that exceed \$50 in the aggregate and all non-monetary contributions require disclosure of the contributor's name, address, amount received, method of contribution, date of the contribution, the aggregate amount given, and whether the contributor is a lobbyist or the spouse or dependent child of a lobbyist.

For individuals who contribute to the committee in excess of \$100 in the aggregate, the treasurer must report the contributor's principal occupation and name of employer to the extent known.

For individuals who contribute to the committee in excess of \$1,000 in the aggregate, the treasurer must obtain and report the contributor's principal occupation and employer. The treasurer is required to request this information from the contributor by certified mail if it is not provided with the contribution within three business days of receipt. If this information is not provided, the treasurer may not deposit any



contributions that would cause the \$1,000 threshold to be exceeded, and the same must be returned.

[General Statutes § [9-608\(c\)\(1\) and \(2\)](#)]

Monetary receipts in the form of personal checks written on joint accounts should be attributed to the individual who *signs* the check. If both individuals on a joint checking account sign the check, then the contribution should be allocated equally between them. If, however, the check is accompanied by a signed written statement from the joint bank account holders indicating that the contribution should be allocated differently, then the check must be allocated in accordance with such statement.

**Example:** John and Jane Doe have a joint bank account. John and Jane both sign a \$1,000 contribution check to a referendum committee. On contribution cards signed by John and Jane, they indicate they would like \$250 of the contribution to be from Jane and \$750 of the contribution to be from John. The committee should report a \$250 contribution from Jane and a \$750 contribution from John in Section B of the [SEEC Form 20](#).

[General Statutes § [9-606\(b\)](#) (as amended by [P.A. 11-48](#))]

A monetary receipt in the form of a money order is considered to be “cash” and should be reported as such. As is described earlier in this Guide, there is a limit of \$100 of aggregated contributions made by cash or money order per individual.

[General Statutes § [9-611\(d\)](#)]

#### **ii. Loans**

All loans are reported in Section D, “Loans Received this Period,” of [SEEC Form 20](#), regardless of whether they are considered contributions. The treasurer must report the name and address of any bank or other lender which has made a loan to the committee, the principal amount of the loan received in the reporting period, along with the name and address of any person who is a guarantor or cosigner of the loan. Outstanding loan balances must be continuously reported as a debt, on the “Summary Page” of [SEEC Form 20](#).

[General Statutes § [9-608\(c\)\(1\)\(E\)](#)]

#### **iii. Contributions from Other Committees**

Any monetary receipt from another committee must be reported as either a contribution, and disclosed in Section C1, “Contributions from Other Committees,” or as a reimbursement or payment from the committee that is not a contribution in Section C2, “Reimbursements, Payments, or Surplus Distributions from Other Committees” (see applicable limitations in Section C. Raising Funds for Your Committee of this chapter). Any non-monetary contribution received from another committee must be disclosed in Section M, “In-Kind Contributions.” As is discussed earlier in this Guide, referendum committees may not receive contributions from certain types of committees.

#### **iv. Monetary Receipts Not Considered Contributions**

All other monetary receipts that are not contributions must be disclosed. Examples include interest posted or received from deposits in authorized investment accounts (reported in Section J as “Interest from Deposits in Authorized Accounts”); bank credits or refunds (reported in Section K as “Miscellaneous Monetary Receipts not Considered



Contributions"); and certain other monetary receipts from fundraisers reported in Section L1 of [SEEC Form 20](#).

### b. Reporting Fundraising Events

The treasurer is required to disclose all receipts of a fundraiser whether or not such receipts constitute a contribution to the committee. Each fundraising affair, including the date, location, and a description, is required to be reported in Section L1 "Fundraiser Event Information" of [SEEC Form 20](#). All monetary receipts received at the given event which are contributions may be recorded as an aggregate amount in Section A of the [SEEC Form 20](#) if the contributor has contributed \$50 or less in the aggregate. If the contributor's total contributions given to the committee exceed \$50, the contributor must be itemized in Section B. The treasurer must identify the corresponding fundraising event at which the given contribution was received in Section B as well. The purchase of fundraising tickets are considered contributions and therefore must be reported in the appropriate section, dependent upon the amount purchased by the contributor and the aggregate amount of other contributions by the same contributor.

Each non-monetary receipt received at the event which is a contribution must be itemized as an in-kind contribution in Section M of [SEEC Form 20](#). Again, the treasurer must identify the fundraising event listed in L1 at which the given in-kind contribution was received.

The donations received in connection with a fundraising affair that do not constitute contributions must be disclosed in Section L4, "In-Kind Donations Not Considered Contributions," of the [SEEC Form 20](#). Such itemizations must include the name and address of each such donor and the corresponding amount.

The treasurer must also separately itemize each expenditure made by the committee in connection with the fundraising affair in the same manner as any other committee expenditure.

[General Statutes § [9-608\(c\)\(1\) and \(4\)](#)]

**Important Note:** Referendum committees should not be entering information in Section L3, "Purchases of Advertising in a Program Book," on the [SEEC Form 20](#) because this exemption does not apply to political committees. If a referendum committee wishes to sell advertising in a program book, **all** purchases of advertisements constitute contributions and must come from permissible sources, must be within the applicable contribution limits for such sources, and must be reported as contributions on the [SEEC Form 20](#). For more information on the exemptions that are applicable to referendum committees, please see the Commission's [A Guide for Political Committees](#).

### c. Reporting Expenditures

Expenditures are reported in Section P, "Expenses Paid by Committee," of the [SEEC Form 20](#). Each expenditure, regardless of the amount, must be separately itemized with the following information:

- Payee's full name and address;
- Amount, date, description, and method of payment;



- Expenditure Code identifying the purpose of the expenditure (*Expenditure Codes are listed in the [SEEC Form 20 instructions](#)*); and
- If applicable, whether the expenditure is coordinated with another committee and whether reimbursement is sought.

The obligation to report **expenses incurred** arises when the committee enters into a written contract, promise or agreement to make an expenditure. For example, if a referendum committee purchases mailers that it distributes in June but is not billed for them until August, the committee would report the mailers as an expense incurred on its July 10<sup>th</sup> filing. Each expense incurred but not yet paid must be separately itemized in the same manner as expenditures paid, including the disclosure of any secondary payees. Expenses incurred but not paid are reported in Section S, “Expenses Incurred by Committee but Not Paid During this Period” of the [SEEC Form 20](#). If a committee incurs an expense but will not know the actual cost until it receives an invoice at a later date, it should still report the expenditure incurred in Section S in the period in which it was incurred and provide a good faith **estimate** of the amount. The treasurer must then report the expense incurred on Line 28, Column A, of the Summary Page Totals on page 2 of the [SEEC Form 20](#). Once the expense is paid off, the treasurer must subtract the corresponding amount from the total reported on Line 28A.

[General Statutes §§ [9-601b\(c\)](#), [9-606\(a\)](#), [9-608\(c\)\(1\)](#)]

Each expenditure that is a **reimbursement to a committee worker** must be treated as any other expenditure and must include an itemization of any payments to secondary payees (e.g. the vendors who transacted with the committee worker). Such reimbursements are reported in Section P, “Expenses Paid by Committee,” using “RCW” as the Expenditure Code. In a separate section of [SEEC Form 20](#), Section T, “Itemization of Reimbursements to Committee Workers and Consultants,” the treasurer must itemize the expenditure for which the worker was reimbursed. This section will not affect the balance on hand and need not be carried forward to the “Summary Page Totals.”

[General Statutes §§ [9-607\(j\)](#), [9-608\(c\)\(1\)](#)]

#### 4. When to File?

During the period of time that the referendum committee is registered, the treasurer must file financial disclosure statements with the appropriate filing repository by the following deadline dates:

- With the committee’s registration statement ([SEEC Form 3](#)) if the committee has received a contribution or disbursement by the time it is registering or within 48 hours of receiving its first contribution or disbursement;
- The 10<sup>th</sup> day of January, April, July, and October (if the committee is open at this time);
- The 7<sup>th</sup> day prior to the day on which the referendum or ballot question is to be voted on;
- The 45<sup>th</sup> day after the referendum in the case of a committee formed for a referendum not held in November (if the committee has not terminated before this time);



- The 90<sup>th</sup> day after the referendum in the case of a committee formed for a referendum not held in November and that has a deficit (if the committee has not terminated before this time);
- The 97<sup>th</sup> day after the referendum in the case of a committee formed for a referendum not held in November that had a surplus (if the committee has not terminated before this time) (this will be a termination statement);
- The 7<sup>th</sup> day of February in the case a committee for a referendum falling on the November general election date which has a deficit; and
- The 7<sup>th</sup> day of April in the case of a committee formed for a referendum falling on the November general election date which has a surplus (this will be a termination statement).

If such **deadline** falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, the statement may be filed on the next business day. Filings must be submitted at some time during the filing period, which begins the day after the conclusion of the reporting period and ends on the filing deadline date.

The **reporting period** for each disclosure statement filed on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January, April, July and October, as well as those filed 45 days after a referendum not held in November, must include the financial activity of the committee beginning on the first day not included in the last filed financial disclosure statement and ending on the last day of the month preceding the month in which the statement is required to be filed. Each disclosure statement filed on the 7<sup>th</sup> day preceding the day of the referendum, however, must include the financial activity of the committee beginning on the first day not included on the last filed financial disclosure statement and ending as of two days immediately preceding the required filing deadline day, i.e. nine days before the referendum question is voted on.

Financial disclosure statements are **timely** if they are either postmarked by the United States Postal Service before midnight on or before the required filing deadline date or delivered by hand to the town clerk's office by 4:30 p.m. on the day of the filing deadline. For those committees that file with the State Elections Enforcement Commission, statements are considered timely filed if they are filed electronically via eCRIS before 11:59 p.m. on or before the filing deadline date or if they are **received by** the Commission's offices by 5:00 p.m. on or before the filing deadline date if delivered by the United States Postal Service, courier service, parcel service or hand delivery.

**Important Note:** Some town clerk's offices may not have office hours or may have shortened office hours on a filing deadline day. This does not relieve the treasurer of filing by the deadline, so be sure to confirm the office hours of the town clerk if delivery by hand is anticipated.

For more information on termination filings, please see **Section F** of this chapter. [General Statutes § [9-608\(a\), \(d\), and \(e\)](#) (as amended by [P.A. 11-48](#))]

## 5. Late Filing Fees

Failure to file the financial disclosure statement by the applicable deadline date subjects the treasurer to an **automatic and non-discretionary \$100 late filing fee**, which is the personal responsibility of the treasurer and is **not** a legitimate expenditure of the committee.



Late filing fees are payable to the town clerk, if it is the committee's filing repository, or the State Elections Enforcement Commission, Campaign Finance and Disclosure Unit, if the Commission is the committee's filing repository. This fine is **mandatory** regardless of the reason for the late filing.

In addition, a treasurer's failure to submit these filings within seven days after receiving a failure to file notice from the town clerk by certified mail, return receipt requested, and/or within 21 days after notice from the State Elections Enforcement Commission, will constitute a violation of General Statutes § [9-608](#) and will subject the treasurer to an additional civil penalty between \$200 and \$2,000. These additional fines and penalties are enforced by the State Elections Enforcement Commission, and the town clerk is required to refer such failures to the Commission in a timely fashion after the seven day late period expires.

[General Statutes § [9-623](#)]

## 6. Copies of Disclosure Statements

The treasurer must provide the committee chairperson with a duplicate copy of the financial disclosure statement at the time of filing.

[General Statutes § [9-608\(d\)](#)]

The registration and financial disclosure statements filed on behalf of referendum committees are available for public inspection at the applicable filing repository. These statements are required to be kept by the filing repository for five years from the date of filing.

[General Statutes § [9-608\(c\)\(7\)](#)]

## F. Termination of the Committee

### 1. Dissolution of a Referendum Committee that has a Surplus

In the event that the committee has a surplus and the referendum is not held in conjunction with a regular November election, the treasurer must distribute the surplus within 90 days after the referendum is held and file a termination statement (checking off "termination" as the type of report) within seven days of this distribution. Surplus distributions for a committee formed for a referendum held in conjunction with a regular November election must be made by March 31, and the termination financial disclosure statement is due by April 7.

A committee formed for a single referendum that did **not** receive contributions from a business entity, labor union or other organization may distribute its surplus to one or more of the following:

- a party committee;
- an ongoing political committee;
- the national committee of a political party;
- all contributors on a prorated basis;
- state or municipal governments or agencies; or
- a tax-exempt organization organized under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



A committee formed for a single referendum that has received contributions from a business entity, labor union or other organization may distribute its surplus, in whole or in part, to one or more of the following:

- all contributors on a prorated basis;
- state or municipal governments or agencies; or
- a tax-exempt organization organized under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

[General Statutes § [9-608\(e\)\(1\) and \(3\)](#)]

## **2. Dissolution of a Referendum Committee that has a Deficit**

If the committee has a deficit, the treasurer must file a financial statement 90 days after the referendum if the referendum is not conducted in conjunction with a November election and indicate the amount of the deficit (checking off "deficit" as the type of report). If the referendum is held in conjunction with a regular November election, then the statement is due on February 7. The treasurer is also required to file an additional statement on the seventh day of any succeeding month when there is an increase or decrease in the deficit which is greater than \$500 from the last filed disclosure statement. The filing deadline for such a supplemental deficit statement is on the seventh day of the next succeeding month. A final termination statement must be filed on the seventh day of the succeeding month following elimination of the deficit, and this is true even where the change in deficit was less than \$500.

[General Statutes § [9-608\(e\)\(4\)](#)]

## **3. Continued Existence for a Successive Referendum**

Generally, a referendum committee is required to terminate its existence after the referendum has ended, the timing of which depends on whether it has surplus or deficit, as previously described in the above two sections.

A referendum committee may, however, continue its existence if the committee reasonably believes that a substantially similar referendum question on the same issue will be submitted to the electorate within six months after the first referendum, such as successive budget referenda.

If a successive referendum is held, the committee shall terminate its existence by expending surplus within 90 days following the date of the successive referendum and filing a termination statement seven days thereafter or, in the event of a deficit, filing a deficit statement 90 days following the date of the successive referendum. If a successive referendum fails to materialize, as reasonably expected, then the committee must terminate its existence within the same timeframe.

[General Statutes § [9-608\(e\)](#) (as amended by [P.A. 11-48](#))]



## IV. Use of Public Funds

Public funds may **not** be used to influence anyone to vote for or against a pending referendum question. Anyone found in violation of this prohibition may be required to pay a civil penalty of either \$1,000 or twice the improper expenditure, whichever is greater. If a violation is found, the Commission will typically order that restitution be made to the municipality or government entity in the amount of the improper expenditure. An individual paying a civil penalty imposed under this section may **not** be reimbursed or indemnified with public funds.

[General Statutes § [9-369b](#)]

### A. When Does the Ban Apply?

The prohibition on the use of public funds to advocate for or against a referendum applies once a referendum is **pending**. A referendum is pending when the necessary actions are taken requiring submission of the referendum question to voters. This occurs in many different forms on the local level and may follow an adjourned town meeting or vote of the local legislative body or depend on interpretations of a local charter. You should direct questions of whether a referendum is pending and, therefore, when the ban applies in your jurisdiction, to **your local town attorney**. If a complaint is filed, the Commission will determine whether the referendum was pending under the particular facts of that case.

### B. What Types of Activities are Prohibited?

Any expenditure of public funds to advocate a result or influence any person to vote for or against the referendum is prohibited once the referendum is pending. This includes the dissemination of printed materials, preparation of video or website presentations, supplies, equipment, postal permits, anything in any form used to advocate a position on a referendum.

Parent teacher organizations, school administrators, municipal officials and employees, or any other person may not use school or town equipment to prepare or copy advocacy material. The use of schoolchildren as couriers to deliver advocacy material to parents and guardians is a prohibited expenditure in violation of General Statutes § [9-369b](#). The only exception to this prohibition is that a notice limited to the time, date, place, question to be voted upon, and encouragement to vote (though not a particular way) may be sent home to parents and guardians via schoolchildren without violating the ban.

School or town facilities may not be used by political committees or other groups for the purpose of advocating a position on a referendum unless such facilities are made available to all such groups regardless of their viewpoint. If a charge is levied for use of a facility, all groups must be charged the same rate.

### C. What is Considered Advocacy?

The Commission utilizes an objective standard and evaluates whether a “reasonable person” would believe that a communication urged them to vote in a particular manner. The Commission has found that stated threats of program cuts and the dire consequences of failing to approve referenda, as well as statements of need and



justification, constitute advocacy. If a violation is alleged, the Commission will review the communication and determine whether the communication and the circumstances surrounding that communication taken as a whole would make a reasonable person believe that a particular result is being urged. The Commission has been more likely to find that materials issued in the time period immediately preceding the referendum are intended to influence a reader to vote in a particular manner.

## D. How Can a Public Official Inform the Public?

An individual, including an individual who is a public official or public employee, may use her private funds or resources to communicate a position on a referendum. An individual may either act independently to make expenditures to promote or oppose a referendum question, or may act together with other individuals.

### 1. An Individual Acting Alone

Any individual acting alone, including a public official or employee, may spend his or her own personal funds without limit on his or her own time, but must file a [SEEC Form 22](#) (disclosure statement) if he spends more than \$1,000.

**Example:** First Selectman Fred is asked to come speak at an afternoon PTO meeting in support of the upcoming budget referendum. Because the meeting occurs during a time for which Fred is paid by the town, he may not attend because that would be considered use of public funds to advocate a position on a referendum. However, if the meeting takes place after working hours or on his lunch break, for example, Fred is allowed to attend the meeting and advocate his position as long as he is not otherwise using public funds (i.e., he cannot bring materials that his secretary prepared on paid time and/or using office equipment, he cannot post his personal views on the town's website, he cannot use town email to promote his views, etc.).

### 2. Two or More Individuals Acting Together

Public officials and employees, as well as other individuals, may join together to advocate their views on a referendum question. This includes contributing personal funds or time to influence a referendum question, as well as asking others to contribute, provided the time spent on these activities is on personal time rather than during the official's paid time. Public officials are treated the same as private citizens and are permitted to speak on their own, unpaid time and use their personal resources to advocate a position on the referendum.

[Public Act 10-187](#) introduced a "safe harbor" into the law, providing that two or more individuals acting together and who receive funds or make or incur expenditures not exceeding \$1,000 are not required to register a political committee, so long as they stay under the \$1,000 threshold.

However, if such individuals acting together receive funds or make or incur expenditures exceeding \$1,000 in the aggregate, they must register a referendum committee ([SEEC Form 3](#)) and comply with the requisite disclosure requirements as described in [Chapter III. Referendum Committees](#). Because a group that has reached the \$1,000 threshold must form a committee and disclose all of its previous financial activity, any group of two or more individuals engaging in referendum spending is urged to keep records of all of its financial activity, including all contributions and expenditures.



## E. Acceptable Uses of Public Funds to Inform through Communications

There are also **limited** ways in which public funds may be used for communications about a referendum. Please note that these are the **only** ways public funds may be used. If the communication does not fall into one of these categories, it is likely a violation of election law.

**1. An Explanatory Text:** An explanatory text (i.e., text explaining the referendum question) may be issued with public funds, provided that it:

- a. is authorized by vote of the municipal legislative body;
- b. is prepared by the municipal clerk;
- c. is approved by the municipal attorney; **and**
- d. does not advocate either the approval or disapproval of the referendum (as previously discussed above).

In a municipality that has a town meeting as its legislative body, the board of selectmen may authorize an explanatory text by majority vote. For any referendum called by a regional school district, the regional board of education may authorize an explanatory text issued with public funds, which must be approved by the attorney for the regional school board. The regional school board's secretary is responsible, in lieu of the municipal clerk, for preparing the explanatory text and satisfying the other obligations imposed on the clerk pursuant to General Statutes § [9-369b\(a\)](#). If an explanatory text is issued, it must be printed in sufficient supply for public distribution and distributed to each absentee ballot applicant. At least three posters of the explanatory text must be posted at each polling place.

[General Statutes § [9-369b\(a\)](#)]

**2. Neutral Printed Materials:** Neutral materials in addition to explanatory text may be prepared and printed with public funds provided that they:

- a. are authorized by vote of the municipal legislative body, or board of selectmen in a town that has a town meeting as its legislative body, or the regional school board, as the case may be;
- b. are approved by the municipal attorney or regional school board attorney, as the case may be; **and**
- c. do not advocate either the approval or disapproval of the referendum, i.e. are neutral in content.

[General Statutes § [9-369b\(a\)](#)]

**3. Pro-Con Summaries:** Such summaries of the issues surrounding a referendum are permitted **only** if provided for by local ordinance. If an ordinance allowing pro-con summaries is in effect, a municipality may use public funds to provide for concise summaries of *arguments both for and against* the referendum. In order to utilize a pro-con summary for a referendum, the municipality must also issue an explanatory text. The ordinance must provide for a committee composed of members of various viewpoints concerning the referendum, such as taxpayer and parent-teacher groups. The committee should provide an opportunity for public comment on the summaries. Summaries must also be approved by vote of the municipality's legislative body and must be posted and distributed in the same manner as explanatory texts. Each



summary shall state that it does not constitute an endorsement by, or represent the official position of, the municipality.

[General Statutes §[9-369b\(d\)](#)]

**4. Press Releases or Letters to the Editor:** A municipal official may use public funds, facilities and supplies to prepare a written, printed or typed summary of his/her viewpoint on a pending referendum prepared for any news medium. Such communications include press releases and letters to the editor. A municipal official may also on paid time participate in bona fide news programs not sponsored by the town or school system.

[General Statutes § [9-369b\(a\)](#)]

**5. Responses to Constituent Requests:** A municipal official may respond to a constituent request for information both in writing (e.g. a letter) and verbally (e.g. responding to a question posed at a meeting). With respect to written communication, this exemption contemplates a single letter or response and does not apply if the official attempts to distribute the response to an audience larger than who requested the information. For example, leaving unsolicited photocopies of an official's summary prepared at public expense at the back of a meeting room has been found to violate General Statutes § [9-369b](#).

**6. Use of Public Meeting Rooms:** Use of public meeting rooms free-of-charge is permissible if access is made available to all groups or committees expressing an advocacy position in connection to the referendum on a non-discriminatory basis. Similarly, a charge may be made for the use of public facilities for this purpose as long as all sides are charged the same and access is provided on a non-discriminatory basis.

**7. Time, Date, and Place Reminders:** The Commission has determined that notice limited to the time, date, place, question to be voted upon, and encouragement to vote (though not a particular way) are permissible communications in regard to referenda. For example, a school may send flyers home to parents and guardians via schoolchildren if they are limited to the aforementioned subject matter.



## V. General Prohibitions and Penalties

### A. Vote Buying and Selling

No person may knowingly give, lend or promise to give or lend any money or other valuable consideration to any person to influence any person to vote, or refrain from voting for or against any referendum. Any person who votes for or against any referendum question in consideration of any gift or other valuable consideration received shall be guilty of illegal practices.

[General Statutes § [9-622\(1\)](#)]

### B. Contributions in False Name

No person may make a payment or contribution to a treasurer in any name other than the name of the true donor or contributor, nor may any treasurer knowingly receive the payment or contribution. This section is violated when the original source of funds, for example, gives another person cash to make a contribution in his or her own name. The Commission treats such violations seriously. A treasurer is prohibited from reporting the name of someone other than the true donor or payor on the committee's financial disclosure statement.

[General Statutes § [9-622\(7\)](#)]

### C. Unlawful Solicitation of Contributions or Making of Expenditures

For referendum committees, only a treasurer may authorize the deposit or the expenditure of funds on behalf of a referendum committee. No such deposits or expenditures may be made during the period in which there exists a vacancy in the position of treasurer and there is no deputy treasurer of the committee to act as treasurer. No person may solicit, make or receive excessive contributions or payments which are otherwise prohibited by the provisions the General Statutes.

[General Statutes §§ [9-602](#), [9-605](#), [9-622\(10\)](#)]

### D. General Criminal and Civil Penalties

Any person who violates any provision of Connecticut's Campaign Finance Laws is subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$2,000 or twice the amount of the improper contribution or payment, whichever is greater.

Any person who "knowingly and willfully" violates any provision of Connecticut's Campaign Finance Laws is subject to criminal penalties of up to \$5,000 in fines, or five years imprisonment, or both.

[General Statutes §§ [9-7b\(a\)\(2\)](#), [9-623\(a\)](#)]



## VI. Complaints

### A. Who May Bring a Complaint?

Any individual may bring a complaint to the State Elections Enforcement Commission requesting that an investigation be made into any alleged violation of the state election or campaign finance laws.

The Commission may, on its own initiative, also decide to conduct an investigation on any possible violation of election or campaign finance laws.

[General Statutes § [9-7b](#)]

### B. Form of Complaint

All complaints filed with the Commission must be in writing and sworn to under oath by the complainant. A [complaint form](#) is available at the Commission's offices and on its website ([www.ct.gov/seec](http://www.ct.gov/seec)), and may be used to file complaints. A complaint may also be filed in letter form provided that it is sworn to under oath.

Complaints must be submitted with an original signature of the complainant. No copies or facsimiles will be accepted.

### C. Contents of Complaints

Complaints should include the following:

1. The legal name, address and telephone number of the person filing the complaint.
2. A clear and concise statement of the facts including:
  - a. The date of the alleged violation(s);
  - b. The identity of the person(s) alleged to have committed the violation(s);
  - c. The identity of any person(s) who may have knowledge of the facts asserted in the complaint; and
  - d. Any other document, written material or other information known to the complainant and having a bearing on the violation(s) alleged in the complaint.

Complaints should be mailed to:

State Elections Enforcement Commission  
Attn: Enforcement Unit  
20 Trinity Street – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Hartford, CT 06106



## VII. Conclusion

This Guide is intended to summarize the most important provisions relating to Connecticut's campaign financing requirements relevant to referenda.

### Contact Us

Inquiries regarding campaign financing requirements, legal interpretations of the State Elections Enforcement Commission, and requests for formal advice may be addressed to:

State Elections Enforcement Commission  
Attn: Compliance Unit  
20 Trinity Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-1628

Main Telephone:	860-256-2940
Toll Free (outside Hartford area):	866-SEEC-INFO
Main Fax:	860-256-2981
Website:	<a href="http://www.ct.gov/seec">www.ct.gov/seec</a>
Email:	<a href="mailto:seec@ct.gov">seec@ct.gov</a>



## VIII. Glossary

**Agent:** A person authorized to act for or in place of another. See General Statutes § [9-601\(18\)](#) (as amended by [P.A. 10-187](#)) (defining “agent”).

**Business Entity:** Any stock corporation, bank, insurance company, limited liability company, business association, bankers association, insurance association, trade or professional association receiving funds from membership dues and other sources, partnership, joint venture, private foundation, trust or estate, cooperative or other association, and any similar organization or entity which is engaged in the operation of a business or profit-making activity. A non-profit entity would **not** satisfy the definition of “business entity.” A solely owned professional service corporation (P.C.) or a sole proprietorship is considered an individual and not a business entity. See General Statutes §§ [9-601\(8\)](#) (defining “business entity”), [9-601\(9\)](#) (defining “individual”).

**Campaign Treasurer:** A Connecticut elector (registered voter) appointed to serve as treasurer for a candidate committee; for a political committee, including exploratory, political slate, and referendum committees; or for a party committee. Only the committee’s properly designated campaign treasurer may deposit funds into, or expend funds from, the committee’s depository account. See General Statutes §§ [9-601\(12\)](#) (defining “campaign treasurer”), [9-606\(d\)](#) (requiring campaign treasurers to be Connecticut electors), [9-608](#) (outlining requirements for statements that campaign treasurers file on behalf of candidate, party, or political committees).

**Candidate Committee:** A committee established by a single candidate to promote only that candidate’s nomination or election to a *specific* office. See General Statutes § [9-601\(4\)](#) (defining “candidate committee”). A candidate may establish only one candidate committee for a particular office to be sought.

**Committee Chairperson:** The individual who has signed the committee’s registration statement as the designated chairperson. The chairperson is responsible to appoint and designate the treasurer and deputy treasurer of the committee on the committee’s registration statement, along with the other required information. See General Statutes § [9-602\(a\)](#).

**Contribution:** Any gift, loan, payment or expenditure of money, goods or anything of value made for the purpose of influencing the nomination or election of any individual to office. The campaign treasurer must report all contributions, both monetary and non-monetary (or “in-kind”), that the committee has received. See General Statutes § [9-601a](#) (offering broad definition for “contribution” as well as specific exceptions).

**Depository Institution:** Under Connecticut’s campaign finance laws, a political committee must establish a single checking account at a financial institution (i.e. bank) located in Connecticut from which it will make all expenditures and deposit all monetary receipts. See General Statutes §§ [9-602\(a\)](#) (directing campaign treasurer of committee to designate single depository institution for committee’s funds), [9-607\(e\)](#) (directing that majority of payments must be made by check, debit card, or credit



card); [Advisory Opinion 1975-6](#) (directing that all expenditures must emanate from a single checking account).

**Deputy Campaign Treasurer:** A “back-up” treasurer who steps in as treasurer if the campaign treasurer is unable to perform his or her duties for any reason. See General Statutes § [9-601\(13\)](#) (defining “deputy campaign treasurer”).

**Entity:** An organization, corporation, cooperative association, limited partnership, professional association, limited liability company, or limited liability partnership, whether organized in Connecticut or any other state. See General Statutes § [9-601\(19\)](#) (as amended by [P.A. 10-187](#)) (defining “entity”).

**Expenditure:** Any outlay or disbursement of funds or anything of value when made to influence the election or nomination of a candidate for office, to promote the success or defeat of a referendum question, or to benefit a political party. See General Statutes § [9-601b](#) (establishing meaning of “expenditure” for campaign finance purposes, and exceptions to that definition).

**Individual:** A human being, a sole proprietorship, or a professional service corporation organized under Chapter 594a of the Connecticut General Statutes and owned by a single human being. See General Statutes § [9-601\(9\)](#) (defining “individual” for purposes of Connecticut’s campaign finance laws).

**In-Kind Contributions:** Donation of goods, services, or anything of value (other than cash, checks, or other negotiable instruments) that the recipient committee or candidate receives free of charge or at less than the usual charge.

**Organization:** All labor organizations, employee organizations, bargaining representative organizations for teachers, local, state or national organizations to which any labor organization pays fees or membership dues, as well as any trade or professional association receiving its funds exclusively from membership dues. See General Statutes § [9-601\(7\)](#) (defining “organization”).

**Party Committee:** A committee established by a political party, including a local town committee or state central committee, excluding party-affiliated district, ward, or borough committees, which are considered “political committees.” A state central or town committee may establish only one party committee for the financing of candidates’ campaigns in Connecticut. See General Statutes § [9-601\(2\)](#) (defining “party committee”).

**“Pending” Referendum Question:** A referendum is pending when all of the necessary legal conditions have been satisfied to require the publication of a warning (notice) that a referendum question will be submitted to a vote of the eligible voters of a municipality on a certain date. For example, a referendum may be deemed to be pending when a sufficient number of signatures have been certified by the town clerk under General Statutes § [7-7](#), or when the selectmen (or other authorized municipal official) have determined that a referendum will be conducted and a date has been set, or when the exact wording of the question has been finalized. Because these are factual questions, the Commission will generally defer to the town attorney to make the



determination of whether a referendum question is pending, until such time as a complaint is filed alleging a violation of the law concerning the referendum. Any questions about whether or when a referendum question is officially pending should thus be directed to your local town attorney.

**Political Committee:** A committee established by a business, organization, group of individuals, an exploratory candidate, or a slate of municipal candidates to promote the election or nomination of candidates for public office or to advocate for or against a referendum issue. Political committees may also be established by legislative leadership or legislative caucuses. See General Statutes § [9-601\(3\)](#) (defining “political committee”).

**Preexisting Groups:** Preexisting groups are entities or informal associations that have an existing bank account that was established for reasons other than the referendum at hand. The funds in the bank account cannot have been raised for the purpose of spending on this particular referendum. Preexisting groups include organizations, businesses both for profit and not for profit, whether organized in Connecticut or any other state, taxpayer groups, and parent-teacher associations.

**Public Funds:** Any funds belonging to, or under the control of, the state or a political subdivision of the state. See General Statutes § [9-601\(21\)](#) (defining “public funds”).

**Referendum:** A referendum means (1) a question or proposal which is submitted to a vote of the electors or voters of a municipality at any regular or special state or municipal election; (2) a question or proposal which is submitted to a vote of the electors or voters, as the case may be, of a municipality at a meeting of such electors or voters that is neither an election nor a town meeting; or (3) a question or proposal which is submitted to a vote of the electors or voters, as the case may be, of a municipality at a meeting of such electors or voters pursuant to General Statutes § 7-7 or pursuant to charter or special act. See General Statutes § [9-1\(n\)](#) (defining “referendum”).

**Referendum Question:** A question to be voted upon at any election or referendum, including a proposed amendment to the Connecticut Constitution. See General Statutes § [9-601\(15\)](#) (defining “referendum question”).

**Solicitor:** An individual, including a candidate, appointed by a campaign treasurer to receive funds on behalf of a committee organized under the auspices of [Chapter 155](#). See General Statutes § [9-601\(14\)](#) (defining “solicitor”).

**Town Committee:** A type of party committee affiliated at the municipal level.

**Treasurer:** See **Campaign Treasurer**.



## Appendix A

### Contribution Limits Based On 2010 Decennial Census

Town	Population	Limits
Andover	3,303	\$330.30
Ansonia	19,249	\$1924.90
Ashford	4,317	\$431.70
Avon	18,098	\$1809.80
Barkhamsted	3,799	\$379.90
Beacon Falls	6,049	\$604.90
Berlin	19,866	\$1986.60
Bethany	5,563	\$556.30
Bethel	18,584	\$1858.40
Bethlehem	3,607	\$360.70
Bloomfield	20,486	\$2048.60
Bolton	4,980	\$498.00
Bozrah	2,627	\$262.70
Branford	28,026	\$2802.60
Bridgeport	144,229	\$14,422.90
Bridgewater	1,727	\$172.70
Bristol	60,477	\$6047.70
Brookfield	16,452	\$1645.20
Brooklyn	8,210	\$821.00
Burlington	9,301	\$930.10
Canaan	1,234	\$123.40
Canterbury	5,132	\$513.20
Canton	10,292	\$1,029.20
Chaplin	2,305	\$230.50
Cheshire	29,261	\$2,926.10
Chester	3,994	\$399.40
Clinton	13,260	\$1,326.00
Colchester	16,068	\$1,606.80
Colebrook	1,485	\$148.50
Columbia	5,485	\$548.50
Cornwall	1,420	\$142.00
Coventry	12,435	\$1243.50
Cromwell	14,005	\$1,400.50
Danbury	80,893	\$8,089.30
Darien	20,732	\$2073.20
Deep River	4,629	\$462.90
Derby	12,902	\$1,290.20
Durham	7,388	\$738.80
Eastford	1,749	\$174.90
East Granby	5,148	\$514.80
East Haddam	9,126	\$912.60
East Hampton	12,959	\$1,295.90
East Hartford	51,252	\$5,125.20
East Haven	29,257	\$2,925.70
East Lyme	19,159	\$1,915.90
Easton	7,490	\$749.00
East Windsor	11,162	\$1,116.20
Ellington	15,602	\$1,560.20
Enfield	44,654	\$4,465.40
Essex	6,683	\$668.30
Fairfield	59,404	\$5,940.40
Farmington	25,340	\$2,534.00
Franklin	1,922	\$192.20
Glastonbury	34,427	\$3,442.70
Goshen	2,976	\$297.60
Granby	11,282	\$1,128.20
Greenwich	61,171	\$6,117.10
Griswold	11,951	\$1,195.10



Town	Population	Limits
Groton	40,115	\$4,011.50
Guilford	22,375	\$2,237.50
Haddam	8,346	\$834.60
Hamden	60,960	\$6,096.00
Hampton	1,863	\$186.30
Hartford	124,775	\$12,477.50
Hartland	2,114	\$211.40
Harwinton	5,642	\$564.20
Hebron	9,686	\$968.60
Kent	2,979	\$297.90
Killingly	17,370	\$1,737.00
Killingworth	6,525	\$652.50
Lebanon	7,308	\$730.80
Ledyard	15,051	\$1,505.10
Lisbon	4,338	\$433.80
Litchfield	8,466	\$846.60
Lyme	2,406	\$240.60
Madison	18,269	\$1,826.90
Manchester	58,241	\$5,824.10
Mansfield	26,543	\$2,654.30
Marlborough	6,404	\$640.40
Meriden	60,868	\$6,086.80
Middlebury	7,575	\$757.50
Middlefield	4,425	\$442.50
Middletown	47,648	\$4,764.80
Milford	52,759	\$5,275.90
Monroe	19,479	\$1,947.90
Montville	19,571	\$1,957.10
Morris	2,388	\$238.80
Naugatuck	31,862	\$3,186.20
New Britain	73,206	\$7,320.60
New Canaan	19,738	\$1,973.80
New Fairfield	13,881	\$1,388.10
New Hartford	6,970	\$697.00
New Haven	129,779	\$12,977.90
Newington	30,562	\$3,056.20
New London	27,620	\$2,762.00
New Milford	28,142	\$2,814.20
Newtown	27,560	\$2,756.00
Norfolk	1,709	\$170.90
North Branford	14,407	\$1,440.70
North Canaan	3,315	\$331.50
North Haven	24,093	\$2,409.30
North Stonington	5,297	\$529.70
Norwalk	85,603	\$8,560.30
Norwich	40,493	\$4,049.30
Old Lyme	7,603	\$760.30
Old Saybrook	10,242	\$1,024.20
Orange	13,956	\$1,395.60
Oxford	12,683	\$1,268.30
Plainfield	15,405	\$1,540.50
Plainville	17,716	\$1,771.60
Plymouth	12,243	\$1,224.30
Pomfret	4,247	\$424.70
Portland	9,508	\$950.80
Preston	4,726	\$472.60
Prospect	9,405	\$940.50
Putnam	9,584	\$958.40
Redding	9,158	\$915.80
Ridgefield	24,638	\$2,463.80
Rocky Hill	19,709	\$1,970.90
Roxbury	2,262	\$226.20
Salem	4,151	\$415.10



<b>Town</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Limits</b>
Salisbury	3,741	\$374.10
Scotland	1,726	\$172.60
Seymour	16,540	\$1,654.00
Sharon	2,782	\$278.20
Shelton	39,559	\$3,955.90
Sherman	3,581	\$358.10
Simsbury	23,511	\$2,351.10
Somers	11,444	\$1,144.40
Southbury	19,904	\$1,990.40
Southington	43,069	\$4,306.90
South Windsor	25,709	\$2,570.90
Sprague	2,984	\$298.40
Stafford	12,087	\$1,208.70
Stamford	122,643	\$12,264.30
Sterling	3,830	\$383.00
Stonington	18,545	\$1,854.50
Stratford	51,384	\$5,138.40
Suffield	15,735	\$1,573.50
Thomaston	7,887	\$788.70
Thompson	9,458	\$945.80
Tolland	15,052	\$1,505.20
Torrington	36,383	\$3,638.30
Trumbull	36,018	\$3,601.80
Union	854	\$85.40
Vernon	29,179	\$2,917.90
Voluntown	2,603	\$260.30
Wallingford	45,135	\$4,513.50
Warren	1,461	\$146.10
Washington	3,578	\$357.80
Waterbury	110,366	\$11,036.60
Waterford	19,517	\$1,951.70
Watertown	22,514	\$2,251.40
Westbrook	6,938	\$693.80
West Hartford	63,268	\$6,326.80
West Haven	55,564	\$5,556.40
Weston	10,179	\$1,017.90
Westport	26,391	\$2,639.10
Wethersfield	26,668	\$2,666.80
Willington	6,041	\$604.10
Wilton	18,062	\$1,806.20
Winchester	11,242	\$1,124.20
Windham	25,268	\$2,526.80
Windsor	29,044	\$2,904.40
Windsor Locks	12,498	\$1,249.80
Wolcott	16,680	\$1,668.00
Woodbridge	8,990	\$899.00
Woodbury	9,975	\$997.50
Woodstock	7,964	\$796.40
State of Connecticut	3,546,071	\$354,607.10