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S.F. No. 3499 - Local Campaign Finance Reporting Requirement Modifications

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S.F. 3499 moves the responsibility for overseeing campaign finance reporting requirements for political committees, political funds, and party units engaged in campaign activity for many local elected offices and ballot questions from the local filing officers to the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board to oversee. (Note that under current law the Board oversees these reporting requirements for ballot questions and local candidates for Hennepin County, Minneapolis, and Special School District No. 1). The bill also makes other various changes to reporting requirements in chapter 211A, which is the chapter that governs local campaign finance reporting.

Section 1 [§10A.01, subd. 7; Ballot question] amends the definition of “ballot question” in chapter 10A to include all ballot questions voted on by voters in a county, city, school district, township, and special district, instead of just those voted on by voters in Hennepin County, Minneapolis, and Special School District No. 1.

Section 2 [§10A.01, subd. 10d; Local candidate] amends the definition of “local candidate” in chapter 10A to include county, city, school district, township, and special district offices, instead of just Hennepin County Count offices, Minneapolis city offices, and School board offices in Special School District No. 1.

Section 3 [§10A.20, subd. 2a; Local election reports] renames the pre-primary report as the July report. This is a report that must be filed by political committees, political funds, and political parties during a non-general-election year.

Section 4 [§211A.01, subd. 3; Candidate] amends the definition of “candidate” in chapter 211A to strike the inclusion of candidates for U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 5 [§211A.01; subd 4a; Committee] defines “committee” to mean a group established by a candidate of two or more people working together to support the election of the candidate to a political subdivision office. A committee may accept contributions and make disbursements on behalf of the candidate. This replaces the repeal of the current definition of “committee.”

Section 6 [§§211A.01, subd. 7; Filing officer] amends the definition of “filing officer” by striking a reference to the other officer authorized by law to place a ballot question on the ballot.

Section 7 [§211A.01, subd. 8; Political purposes] amends the definition of “political purposes” to specify that it applies to voting for a candidate.

Section 8 [§211A.02, subd. 1; When and where filed by committees or candidates] amends reporting requirements for a committee or candidate who receives contributions or disbursements of more than \$750 in a calendar year. In a year when a candidate receives contributions or makes disbursements of more than \$750, the candidate must file the specified reports. Timelines for reports are modified. Guidance is provided on when reporting obligations begin and are discharged. Until a final report is filed, candidates are required to file an annual report in January of each year including information about the previous year.

Section 9 [§211A.02, subd. 2; Information required] makes clarifying and conforming changes to the information required on the report filed by a candidate or committee. Requires that the amount, date, and purpose of each disbursement be included only if disbursements made to the same vendor exceed \$100 in the aggregate during the period covered by the report.

Section 10 [§211A.05, subd. 1; Penalty] strikes references to ballot questions.

Section 11 [§211A.06; Failure to keep account; penalty] adds a reference to a candidate in a list of people who may be guilty of a crime in regards to keeping account records.

Section 12 [§211A.07; Bills when rendered and paid] makes technical or conforming changes to match definitional changes.

Section 13 [§211A.12; Contribution limits] adds references to terms defined in chapter 10A. Makes a conforming change to match a definitional change.

Section 14 [§211A.14; Contributions and solicitations during legislative session] makes a conforming change to match a definitional change. Adds references to terms defined in chapter 10A.

Section 15 [Repealer] repeals Minnesota Statutes § 211A.01, subdivisions 2 and 4 (definitions of ballot question and committee); and § 211A.02, subd. 4 (Congressional candidate financial reports).