

## **Campaign Finance for Judicial Candidates**

Judicial candidates for elected office in Mississippi file campaign finance disclosure reports in accordance with the applicable reporting schedule, regardless of whether the candidate has made any personal expenditures in furtherance of his or her campaign. A “candidate” is someone who has filed his/her qualifying papers to seek office or has expended greater than \$200.00 in the aggregate in furtherance of a campaign.

A judicial candidate shall not personally solicit or accept campaign contributions or personally solicit publicly stated support. However, a judicial candidate may establish committees of responsible persons to conduct campaigns for the candidate through media advertisements, brochures, mailings, candidate forums and other means not prohibited by law. (*Canon 5C(2)*)

- Each political committee shall file a Statement of Organization no later than forty-eight (48) hours after receipt of contributions aggregating in excess of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00), or no later than forty-eight (48) hours after having made expenditures aggregating in excess of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00). (*Miss. Code Ann. 23-15-803*)
- The Statement of Organization form, used for creating a Judicial Political Committee, is available on the Secretary of State’s website ([www.sos.ms.gov](http://www.sos.ms.gov)).
- Such committees may solicit and accept reasonable campaign contributions, manage the expenditure of funds for the candidate’s campaign and obtain public statements of support for the candidacy. (*Canon 5C(2)*)
- A candidate shall not use or permit the use of campaign contributions for the private benefit of the candidate or others. (*Canon 5C(2)*)
- Judicial Political Committees are not prohibited from soliciting and accepting reasonable campaign contributions and public support from lawyers. (*Canon 5C(2)*)
- A candidate’s committee shall not solicit or accept contributions and public support for the candidate’s campaign earlier than 60 days before the qualifying deadline or later than 120 days after the last election in which the candidate participates during the election year. (*Canon 5C(2)*)
- Upon creating a political committee, the committee must file the appropriate campaign finance reports until a Termination Report is filed with the appropriate office. Likewise, each judicial candidate must file the appropriate campaign finance reports until a Termination Report is filed with the appropriate office. Simply losing an election or withdrawing candidacy does not end the reporting obligation. (*Miss. Code Ann. §§ 23-15-805, 23-15-807*)

### **Judicial Loans**

- Judicial candidates must disclose the identity of any individual or entity from which the candidate or the candidate's committee receives a loan or other extension of credit for use in his campaign and any cosigners for a loan or extension of credit.
- The candidate or the candidate's committee shall disclose how the loan or the other extension of credit was used, and how and when the loan or other extension of credit is to be repaid and the method of repayment.
- The candidate or the candidate's committee must disclose all loan documents related to such loans or extensions of credit. (*Miss. Code Ann. 23-15-1023*)
- Forms for reporting loans or extension of credit are available on the Secretary of State's website ([www.sos.ms.gov](http://www.sos.ms.gov)).

### **Distribution of Campaign Materials**

- If any material is distributed by a judicial candidate or his campaign committee or any other person or entity, or at the request of the candidate, his campaign committee or any other person or entity distributing the material shall state it is distributed by the candidate or it is being distributed with the candidate's approval.
- All campaign material shall conspicuously identify who has prepared the material and who is distributing the material. The identifying language shall state whether or not the material has been submitted to and approved by the candidate. If the candidate has not approved the material, the material shall so state. The identity of organizations or committees shall state the names of all officers of the organizations or committees. (*Miss. Code Ann. § 23-15-1025*)

### **Judicial Performance**

- Please see Canon 5 of the Code of Judicial Conduct for important issues and dates for judicial candidates.
- Contact the Mississippi Commission on Judicial Performance at (601) 359-1273 with questions concerning the Code of Judicial Conduct.