



## FACT SHEET ON MASS CAMPAIGN LITERATURE

The City's Election Campaign Control Ordinance contains laws regarding printed campaign advertisements used to support or oppose City candidates and ballot measures. This fact sheet is designed to help candidates and committees gain a better understanding of the applicable laws, but should not be considered a substitute for the actual language contained in San Diego Municipal Code section 27.2970.

- ❖ Mass Campaign Literature means more than 200 substantially similar pieces of campaign literature that are distributed by a candidate or committee within a single calendar month.
- ❖ Mass Campaign Literature includes items that may be distributed through the mail, by campaign workers, or by any other means.
  - ✓ **Mass Campaign Literature includes** mailers, flyers, pamphlets, door hangers, walking cards, posters, yard signs, business cards, campaign buttons 10 inches in diameter or larger, and bumper stickers 60 square inches or larger.
  - ✓ **Mass Campaign Literature does not include** pens, pencils, or other similarly small promotional items on which a “paid for by” disclosure cannot legibly be printed; wearing apparel; skywriting; or member communications other than a communication from a political party to its members. It also does not include a candidate’s or committee’s web site, e-mail messages, or any other Internet-based communication.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Each item of Mass Campaign Literature must include the words “paid for by” immediately followed by the name, street address, and city of the committee paying for the literature.
- ❖ A committee distributing mass campaign literature must disclose itself using the same name that appears on the Form 410 (Statement of Organization) that it filed with the Secretary of State. It may not use an informal, abbreviated, or past version of its name.
- ❖ The “paid for by” disclosure must be in a typeface that is easily legible, contrasts with the background, and is no less than 12 points in size.
- ❖ Before disseminating mass campaign literature, the candidate or committee should carefully review the literature to ensure that the disclosure fully complies with the letter and spirit of the law such that a reasonable person can easily determine who paid for the item. Any candidate or committee that conceals or obscures the identity of the entity paying for mass campaign literature by omitting required information, inserting extraneous information, or engaging in any other action that prevents a full, accurate, and clear disclosure risks being the subject of an Ethics Commission enforcement action.

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<sup>1</sup> Although a paid advertisement on a website is not considered a form of “mass campaign literature,” even when the advertisement supports or opposes a City candidate or ballot measure, ECCO still requires the advertisement to include a “paid for by” disclosure. See the Ethics Commission’s Fact Sheet on Campaign Advertising for more information.

- ❖ A post office box may be used instead of a street address if the committee’s street address is a matter of public record with the Secretary of State (i.e., identified on the committee’s Form 410 – Statement of Organization).
- ❖ If the mass campaign literature includes a solicitation for a contribution to support a City candidate, it must also include the following disclosure: “It is unlawful for a contributor to be reimbursed by any organization, business, or similar entity for a contribution supporting or opposing a City candidate.” The disclosure must be made in a prominent place in a legible contrasting typeface and in a font size that is no smaller than the typeface used in the majority of the other text in the item.
- ❖ A committee making independent expenditures may not distribute Mass Campaign Literature at the behest of, or in coordination with, a candidate or candidate-controlled committee. (Doing so would make the expenditure an unlawful in-kind contribution instead of an independent expenditure; organizations may not make contributions to support or oppose candidates.)
- ❖ Note that under state law an advertisement supporting or opposing a candidate that is paid for by an independent expenditure must include a statement that it was not authorized by a candidate or a committee controlled by a candidate. (See Cal. Gov’t Code section 84506.5.) This requirement is in addition to local law, and does not eliminate the need for a “paid for by” disclosure.
- ❖ Also under state law, whenever campaign materials are sent through the U.S. Postal Service (i.e., a “mass mailing”), the sender’s name and address must be identified on the outside of the mailer in a “paid for by” disclosure in at least a 6 point font. The “sender” is the candidate or committee paying for the largest portion of expenditures attributable to the designing, printing, and posting of the mailer.
  - ✓ A candidate or committee may comply with both state and local law by putting the “paid for by” disclosure on the outside of the mailer in a 12 point font. If only a 6 point font is used on the outside of a mailer, an additional disclosure in a 12 point font must be made elsewhere in the mailer.
  - ✓ Mass mailers consisting of multiple parts may be subject to additional disclosures if sent by a ballot measure committee or by a committee making independent expenditures supporting or opposing a candidate or ballot measure. Each communication that would require a disclosure if distributed separately, and that is included in a package of materials, must contain the required disclosure.
- ❖ If two committees make independent expenditures to produce a single form of Mass Campaign Literature, then information for each committee must be included in the “paid for by” disclosure. (Please see the Ethics Commission’s Fact Sheet on Campaign Advertising for additional information regarding two committees coordinating independent expenditures.). For mass mailings, the “sender” (see definition in bullet above) must be identified on the outside of the mailer, and the names and addresses of all committees sharing in the cost must be shown in another location of the mailer as part of a separate “paid for by” disclosure.
- ❖ The Ethics Commission does not regulate the truth or accuracy of content of Mass Campaign Literature (i.e., it has no control over the publishing of false or misleading information).

For additional information, please contact the Ethics Commission at (619) 533-3476.