



HOUSE BILL 475: Revise Certain Ballot & 48-Hour Report Reqs.

2023-2024 General Assembly

Committee:	House Election Law and Campaign Finance Reform. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	May 16, 2023
Introduced by:	Reps. Blackwell, Mills, N. Jackson	Prepared by:	Jessica Sammons Staff Attorney
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition H475-CSST-32		

OVERVIEW: *The Proposed Committee Substitute (PCS) for House Bill 475 would do the following:*

- *Require that political party designations be printed on official ballots in italics font and at least 10-point in font size, beginning in 2024.*
- *For candidates, political committees, and referendum committees, raise the threshold for filing 48-Hour Reports to \$2,000 for 2023 and 2024, and provide for the State Board of Elections to adjust the reporting threshold based on inflation every two years, beginning in 2025.*
- *Waive the filing of 48-Hour Reports for candidate campaign committees in a primary election when the candidate is unopposed on that ballot, beginning in 2023.*

CURRENT LAW & BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1 – Party Designations on Official Ballots:

All voting in any election in the State is to be done by official ballot, and only votes cast on an official ballot are to be counted. The State Board of Elections is to certify the official ballots and voter instructions used in every election in the State, and each county board of elections is to prepare and produce official ballots for all elections in that county. G.S. 163-165.3.

G.S. 163-165.5 provides for the required contents of an official ballot, including the following:

- A heading prescribed by the State Board, with the term "Official Ballot".
- The title of each office to be voted on and the number of seats to be filled in each ballot item.
- The names of the candidates.
- Party designations in partisan ballot items.
- A means to voters to cast write-in votes, if applicable.
- Instructions to voters.
- The printed title and facsimile signature of the chair of the county board of elections.
- The designation of vacancy sought, for any vacancy for the office of Justice or judge of the courts, as determined by the State Board.

Section 1 would require that, effective beginning with elections held in 2024, political party designations be printed on an official ballot in italics font and at least 10-point in font size.

Jeffrey Hudson
Director



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Sections 2 & 3 – 48-Hour Campaign Finance Reports:

All political committees, including political parties, candidates, and affiliated committees, are to report contributions and expenditures in accordance with Article 22A of Chapter 163. The treasurer of each candidate and political committee must file certain reports with the State Board of Elections as follows:

- Organizational Report – within 10 days of organization.
- 48-Hour Report – within 48 hours of receipt of a contribution or transfer of \$1,000 or more before an election but after the period covered by the last report due before the election.
- Quarterly Reports – in even-numbered years, within 7 working days after the end of the calendar quarter for that quarter, except that:
 - In the first quarter, the report includes the period in April through the 17th day before the primary, and the second quarter report does not include that period.
 - In the third quarter, the report includes the period in October through the 17th day before the election, and the fourth quarter report does not include that period.
- Semi-annual Reports – in any time period not already covered, if contributions are received or expenditures are made, then a report is due on the last day of July for the period January 1 through June 30, and on the last day of January for July 1 through December 31.

The treasurer of each referendum committee must file certain reports with the State Board of Elections as follows:

- Organizational Report – within 10 days of organization.
- Pre-Referendum Report – no later than 10 days before the referendum.
- 48-Hour Report – within 48 hours of receipt of a contribution or transfer of \$1,000 or more before the referendum but after the period covered by the last report due before the referendum.
- Final Report – no later than 10 days after the referendum
- Annual Report – if contributions are received or expenditures are made during a calendar year for which no reports are otherwise required, then a report is due by January 7 of the following year.

Sections 2 and 3 would do the following:

- Raise the threshold amount for requiring a treasurer of each candidate committee, political committee, and referendum committee to file a 48-Hour Report from \$1,000 to \$2,000, for elections held in 2023 and 2024.
- Provide for the threshold amount for requiring a treasurer of each candidate committee, political committee, and referendum committee to file a 48-Hour Report to be adjusted for inflation every two years, based on the Consumer Price Index, in the same manner as the campaign contribution limitation, effective beginning in 2025. The State Board of Elections would be required to set the revised threshold in October of the even-numbered year, publish the revised amount in the North Carolina Register, and notify the Revisor of Statutes.
- Waive the filing of 48-Hour Reports for candidate campaign committees in a primary election in which the candidate is unopposed on that ballot, for any candidate unopposed in a primary election held in 2023 and thereafter.

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EFFECTIVE DATE: Except as otherwise provided, effective when it becomes law and applies to elections held on or after that date.