

Proposed 2007 Session Legislation

Agency Name: **Commissioner of Political Practices** Agency No: **3202**

Priority Number: **3** Filename: **3202-01-003**

Short Title: **Require certain candidates and political committees file finance reports electronically**

Agency Contact Person/Phone: **Gordon Higgins/444-2942**

1. Purpose:
 Provide a new section in Title 13, chapter 37, part 2, MCA, that requires all statewide candidates for elected office, all political party committees, and all statewide ballot measure committees file campaign finance reports electronically.

2. Background:
 The Commissioner's office is finalizing the development of a web-based campaign finance filing system. The system is designed to allow candidates and committees to submit their required reports electronically to increase timely filings, accuracy, and public disclosure. The Commissioner's office staff currently enters the information from hard copy filings. Statewide candidates, political party committees, and ballot measure committees typically have a large number of contributions and expenditures, requiring that these entities file on-line would reduce the workload of the office and result in an almost immediate opportunity for the public to access the reports. Also, since most of these types of filers use an electronic method for recording contributions and expenditures much of the work is completed as a matter of their day-to-day accounting efforts.

3. Fiscal Impact by Fund Type: *This impact should be as specific as possible.*
 See FTE discussion below.

4. Summary Checklist [Check & complete all that apply]--

Housekeeping Only
 Federal Requirement
 Audit Recommendation (Audit No.)
 Major Legislation

Anticipated to be Controversial Legislation
 Bill Draft has been included in Legislation Submittal (if available)

Supports Submitted EPP Item Number:
 Local Government Fiscal Impact

Increases FTE, or
 Decreases FTE by

List FTE amount and program
 Potential 1.00 FTE to a .50 FTE reduction in future biennia. As more candidates and political committees file reports electronically there is a likelihood that office staff will engage in less data entry. However, under the current operation, office staff do not enter all entities required to file reports with the office. It is anticipated that a time will come when the public will demand all campaign finance data, regardless of type, be accessible on-line. Unless electronic filing is made mandatory, there will be a significant amount of on-going data entry necessary to meet that public demand.

Increases Existing Revenue
 Tax
 Fee
 Penalty [amount in #3]

Decreases Existing Revenue
 Tax
 Fee
 Penalty [amount in #3]

Establishes New Revenue
 Tax
 Fee
 Penalty [amount in #3]

Leg. has been Submitted in Previous Legislative Sessions (list priority no, LC no, or bill no):

Legislation would affect other state agencies (list):

Special Interest Groups Affected (list):
 Statewide candidates and certain political committees.

Other: