

# HOUSE RESEARCH

## Bill Summary

**FILE NUMBER:** H.F. 2531  
**Version:** As introduced

**DATE:** March 4, 2014

**Authors:** Laine

**Subject:** Campaign finance technical changes

**Analyst:** Matt Gehring, 651-296-5052

This publication can be made available in alternative formats upon request. Please call 651-296-6753 (voice); or the Minnesota State Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 (TTY) for assistance. Summaries are also available on our website at: [www.house.mn/hrd/](http://www.house.mn/hrd/).

### Overview

This bill makes a number of miscellaneous changes to campaign finance law.

#### Section

- 1** **Associated business.** Modifies a financial threshold for qualifying under the definition of “associated business” in certain circumstances from “\$2,500 or more” to “more than \$2,500.” This modification conforms the phrasing to the phrasing of other financial thresholds in chapter 10A.
- 2** **Candidate.** Modifies the financial threshold for qualifying as a “candidate” for purposes of chapter 10A, to conform to the threshold for registering a campaign committee with the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board.
- 3** **Violations; enforcement.** Updates terminology and eliminates a reference to findings of “probable cause” to more accurately reflect that the board issues findings, conclusions, and orders.
- 4** **Data privacy.** Eliminates a reference to findings of “probable cause.”
- 5** **Data privacy related to electronic reporting system.** Authorizes the board to develop and maintain a system that allows treasurers to enter and store records online, for purposes of complying with the campaign finance reporting laws.

This section provides that data stored in such a system may not be accessed by the board for any purpose without written consent, and is not considered “government data” for purposes of chapter 13 until the data are submitted to the board in a filed report.

## Section

- 6 Changes and corrections.** Increases the late fees that may be assessed if an individual fails to file an amended report, when required to do so. The increased late fees would conform to the late fees provided in law for other types of required filings.
- This section also updates terminology and procedures related to providing notice to an individual required to file an amended report.
- 7 Reconciliation information; penalty.** Requires individuals and associations required to file reports to provide information requested by the board to resolve discrepancies. Failure to respond or cooperate with the board is subject to late filing fees and, if the failure to cooperate is willful, may also result in civil penalties.
- 8 Time for filing.** Specifies the deadline for filing statements of economic interest by judges and county commissioners, who were newly-added to this requirement during the 2013 legislative session.
- 9 Exception; senior judges.** Provides that retired judges and justices appointed to serve as a “senior judge” are not required to file a statement of economic interest.
- 10 Form.** Modifies financial thresholds for including certain data on a statement of economic interest to require reporting of property with a fair market value of “more than \$50,000” rather than “\$50,000 or more.” This modification conforms the phrasing to the phrasing of other financial thresholds in chapter 10A.
- 11 Dues or membership fees.** Increases the threshold for reporting the names of members who contribute dues, membership fees, and contributions to an association’s political fund. Current law requires identification of members who contribute more than \$100 in a year. This section would instead require identification of those who contribute more than \$200 in a year.
- 12 Time for filing.** Modifies required reporting schedules for candidates whose offices do not appear on the ballot at an election, for certain candidates who are not successful in a primary election and for candidates whose name will not appear on the primary election ballot.
- 13 Pre-election reports.** Updates a reference from “election cycle” to “election segment,” to conform to changes that were enacted in 2013.
- 14 Publication of expenditure limit.** Requires the board to post the expenditure limit for offices on the ballot in an election year on the board’s website, rather than in the State Register.
- 15 Civil action.** Eliminates language related to civil actions filed by the board, which is already authorized in other portions of law.
- 16 Campaign reports and data.** Enacts a cross-reference in the government data practices act to reflect the data practices modifications contained in section 5 of this bill.
- 17 Information required.** For candidates and committees in elections for local office, clarifies

**Section**

a “cash on hand” reporting requirement to provide that only the cash on hand designated for political purposes is required to be reported. This section also updates terminology.

- 18**      **Repealer.** Repeals a provision of law that requires the board to suspend a public official who fails to file a required statement of economic interest.
- 19**      **Effective date.** Provides that the bill is effective the day following final enactment.