

1 State of Arkansas  
2 94th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2023  
4  
5 By: Senator C. Tucker  
6

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 585

## For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO REQUIRE REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE OF  
9 ELECTIONEERING COMMUNICATIONS; TO RESTRICT THE AMOUNT  
10 OF MONEY SPENT ON CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCED IN  
11 COORDINATION WITH A CANDIDATE FOR OFFICE; TO AMEND  
12 THE LAW CONCERNING CAMPAIGN FINANCE CONTRIBUTIONS;  
13 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
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## Subtitle

16  
17 TO REQUIRE REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE OF  
18 ELECTIONEERING COMMUNICATIONS; AND TO  
19 RESTRICT THE AMOUNT OF MONEY SPENT ON  
20 CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCED IN  
21 COORDINATION WITH A CANDIDATE FOR OFFICE.  
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24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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26 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 7, Chapter 6, Subchapter 2, is amended  
27 to add an additional section to read as follows:

28 7-6-232. Coordinated communications.

29 (a)(1) A coordinated communication is an in-kind contribution to the  
30 candidate, political party, ballot question committee, or independent  
31 expenditure committee who or to the candidate, political party, ballot  
32 question committee, or independent expenditure committee whose authorized  
33 committee or agent cooperated, consulted, requested, suggested, or acted in  
34 concert with:

35 (A) The person making the coordinated communication or his  
36 or her authorized agent; or



1                   (B) The person making the expenditure for the coordinated  
2 communication or his or her authorized agent.

3                   (2) The in-kind contribution under subdivision (a)(1) of this  
4 section shall be subject to the contribution limits set forth under § 7-6-  
5 203.

6                   (b)(1) As used in this section, "coordinated communication" means a  
7 political advertisement or communication funded by expenditures that contain  
8 express advocacy or the functional equivalent of express advocacy made:

9                   (A) In cooperation or consultation between:

10                   (i)(a) A candidate or his or her authorized  
11 committee or agent;

12                                   (b) A political party or its authorized agent;

13                                   (c) A ballot question committee; or

14                                   (d) An independent expenditure committee; and

15                   (ii) The person making the:

16                                   (a) Communication or his or her authorized  
17 agent; or

18                                   (b) Expenditure for the communication or his  
19 or her authorized agent;

20                   (B) In concert with or at the request or suggestion of:

21                                   (i) A candidate or his or her authorized committee  
22 or agent;

23                                   (ii) A political party or its authorized agent;

24                                   (iii) A ballot question committee; or

25                                   (iv) An independent expenditure committee.

26                   (2) "Coordinated communication" does not include:

27                   (A) A candidate's, a political party committee's, a ballot  
28 question committee's, or an independent expenditure committee's response to  
29 an inquiry about that candidate's, political party committee's, ballot  
30 question committee's, or independent expenditure committee's positions on  
31 legislative or policy issues unless the response or the inquiry concerns the  
32 plans, projects, activities, or needs of the campaign;

33                   (B) Unless the public communication promotes, supports,  
34 attacks, or opposes the endorsing candidate or another candidate who seeks  
35 election to the same office the endorsing candidate is seeking, a public  
36 communication;



1 meets one (1) or more of the following standards:

2 (i) The coordinated communication was created,  
 3 produced, or distributed at the request or suggestion of the candidate or his  
 4 or her agent, the candidate's committee or its agent, or the political party  
 5 or its agent;

6 (ii) The coordinated communication was created,  
 7 produced, or distributed at the request or suggestion of the person paying  
 8 for the communication, and the candidate or his or her agent, the candidate's  
 9 committee or its agent, or the political party or its agent approves the  
 10 request or suggestion;

11 (iii) The candidate or his or her agent, the  
 12 candidate's committee or its agent, or the political party or its agent was  
 13 materially involved in decisions regarding the content, intended audience,  
 14 means or mode of the coordinated communication, specific media outlet used,  
 15 timing, frequency, size, or prominence of the coordinated communication; or

16 (iv) The coordinated communication was created,  
 17 produced, or distributed after one (1) or more substantial discussions about  
 18 the communication between the person paying for the communication or the  
 19 employees or agents of that person and:

20 (a) The candidate or his or her agent;

21 (b) The candidate's committee or its agent;

22 (c) The political party or its agent;

23 (d) A ballot question committee; or

24 (e) An independent expenditure committee.

25 (2) As used in this section, "candidate" means the candidate who  
 26 is positioned to benefit from the coordinated communication, whether the  
 27 coordinated communication promotes that candidate or criticizes his or her  
 28 opponent.

29 (d)(1) A person or an entity is an authorized agent of a candidate, a  
 30 candidate's committee, or a political party under this section if the person  
 31 or entity:

32 (A) Has actual authorization, either expressed or implied,  
 33 from a specific principal to engage in specific activities; and

34 (B) Engages in the activities on behalf of that specific  
 35 principal.

36 (2) If the activities carried out by an authorized agent would

1 result in a coordinated communication if carried out directly by the  
2 candidate, authorized committee staff, or a political party official, the  
3 activities of the authorized agent result in a coordinated communication.

4 (e) As used in this section:

5 (1)(A) "Political advertisement" means any campaign  
6 communication:

7 (i) That is in any form, including without  
8 limitation the following medias:

9 (a) Broadcast;

10 (b) Satellite;

11 (c) Cable;

12 (d) Electronic;

13 (e) Digital;

14 (f) Written;

15 (g) Print;

16 (h) Graphic; and

17 (i) Design;

18 (ii) That is publicly distributed;

19 (iii) Except as provided in subdivision (e)(1)(B) of  
20 this section, that the person or committee making the advertisement or  
21 communication pays money for the production or dissemination of the  
22 advertisement or communication;

23 (iv) That refers to a clearly identified candidate  
24 for public office;

25 (v) That is targeted to the relevant electorate for  
26 that candidate; and

27 (vi) For which the only reasonable interpretation of  
28 the advertisement or communication is that the advertisement or communication  
29 is an attempt to influence a vote for or against a specific candidate or  
30 specific set of candidates.

31 (B)(i) Payment of money under subdivision (e)(1)(A)(iii)  
32 of this section does not include:

33 (a) Utility payments for telephone or internet  
34 service made by the person or committee making the advertisement or  
35 communication; or

36 (b) The costs of producing copies of flyers,

1 handbills, or other documents to be distributed by hand by one (1) or more  
2 volunteers.

3 (ii) Payment of money under subdivision  
4 (e)(1)(A)(iii) of this section includes without limitation money paid to a  
5 person in exchange for the distribution by hand of printed advertisement or  
6 printed communication such as door hangers or push cards.

7 (C) In making a determination under subdivision  
8 (e)(1)(A)(vi) of this section, the Arkansas Ethics Commission shall consider:

9 (i) Whether the advertisement or communication  
10 offers preferential support for or criticism of a clearly identified  
11 candidate for office;

12 (ii) The proximity between the date of the  
13 advertisement or communication and the date of the election for the clearly  
14 identified candidate for office; and

15 (iii) Any other factor the commission deems relevant  
16 to its determination.

17 (D) "Political advertisement" does not include any  
18 communication that:

19 (i) Unless the facilities are owned or controlled by  
20 any political party, political committee, or candidate, appears in a news  
21 story, commentary, or editorial distributed through the facilities of any:

22 (a) Broadcast, cable, satellite radio, or  
23 television station; or

24 (b) Newspaper, magazine, print media, or  
25 internet media business;

26 (ii) Constitutes an independent expenditure that is  
27 reported as required under this subchapter;

28 (iii) Constitutes a candidate debate or forum  
29 conducted, or that solely promotes such a debate or forum and is made by or  
30 on behalf of the person sponsoring the debate or forum;

31 (iv) Is disseminated as a flyer, handbill, or other  
32 document distributed by hand by one (1) or more volunteers;

33 (v) Is disseminated by an organization to the  
34 organization's own membership as reflected in the organizations membership  
35 records or to persons who have requested to receive communications from the  
36 organization for the purpose of indicating candidates whom the organization

1 supports in an upcoming election; or

2 (vi) Is disseminated by a person or committee on the  
 3 official website or social media account maintained by the person or  
 4 committee making the advertisement or communication;

5 (2) "Refers to a clearly identified candidate" means that the  
 6 candidate's name, nickname, photograph, or drawing appears, or the identity  
 7 of the candidate is otherwise apparent through an unambiguous reference such  
 8 as "the Governor", "your county judge", or "the incumbent", or through an  
 9 unambiguous reference to his or her status as a candidate such as "the  
 10 Republican nominee for Governor" or "the Democratic candidate for Secretary  
 11 of State in the State of Arkansas"; and

12 (3) "Targeted to the relevant electorate" means:

13 (A) If the advertisement or communication is publicly  
 14 distributed by a broadcast, cable, satellite radio, or television station or  
 15 by a newspaper, magazine, or other print media, the advertisement or  
 16 communication can be seen, heard, or read:

17 (i) By at least twenty-five thousand (25,000)  
 18 viewers, listeners, or readers in the state, in the case of a candidate for  
 19 statewide office;

20 (ii) By at least ten percent (10%) of a county,  
 21 municipality, or district population, in the case of a candidate for a county  
 22 office, municipal office, school district board of directors, or other  
 23 district office that is not the Senate or the House of Representatives; or

24 (iii) By at least two thousand five hundred (2,500)  
 25 viewers, listeners, or readers in the district, in the case of a candidate  
 26 for the Senate or the House of Representatives;

27 (B) If the advertisement or communication is publicly  
 28 distributed by direct mail, electronic mail, telephone, or by hand by a  
 29 person who has been paid to distribute the advertisement or communication,  
 30 the advertisement or communication is sent to or distributed to:

31 (i) At least two thousand five hundred (2,500)  
 32 individuals in the state, in the case of a candidate for statewide office;

33 (ii) At least one percent (1%) of a county,  
 34 municipality, or district population, in the case of a candidate for a county  
 35 office, municipal office, school district board of directors, or other  
 36 district office that is not the Senate or the House of Representatives; or

