



Voter's Right to Know Act (VRKA): Guide to Arizona's New Campaign Finance Disclosure Law

Overview

Arizona's Voter's Right to Know Act represents a significant change in the state's campaign finance landscape. The law aims to enhance transparency in political spending by mandating disclosure of substantial media expenditures in both statewide and other political campaigns. The key provisions and necessary filing requirements are as follows:

Key Provisions

1. Disclosure Thresholds:

- Statewide Campaigns: Any individual or entity spending \$50,000 or more on campaign media spending in support of or opposition to a candidate, a recall election, or ballot measure must disclose their spending, the source of the funding, and any intermediaries or entities or decide how the funds are spent.
- Other Campaigns: For campaigns not at the statewide level, the disclosure threshold is set at \$25,000 on campaign media spending for the same reasons described for statewide campaigns.

2. Campaign Media Spending Definition:

- Means spending monies for a public communication that promotes or opposes any election candidate, any public communication that supports or opposed any recall, initiative or referendum, or any other partisan campaign activity.
- Media spending includes expenditures for advertising on television, radio, print media, digital platforms, and other similar channels.

3. Disclosure Requirements:

- An Initial Report shall be filed within five (5) days after first spending monies or accepting in-kind contributions totaling \$50,000 or more for a statewide campaign or \$25,000 or more for any other type of campaign
- A Supplemental Report shall be filed within three (3) days after the covered person spends monies or accepts in-kind contributions for campaign media spending totaling an additional \$25,000 or more in statewide campaigns or an additional \$15,000 or more on during an election cycle in any other type of campaigns
- An Amended Report shall be filed within (20) twenty days when any of the information required to be disclosed in the Initial or Supplemental Disclosure Report has changed.

This rapid reporting is designed to ensure that the public is informed about significant campaign media spending and the identity of the donors, entities, campaign finance managers, and media responsible for the campaign media spending.

4. Content of Disclosure Report:

- The identity of the person who owns or controls the money being contributed.
- The identity of any entity established, financed, maintained or controlled by the person who owns or controls the money being contributed and that maintains its own transfer records.
- The name, address and position of the person who is the custodian of the transfer records.
- The name, address and position of the person who controls how the money is spent.
- The total amount of money donated or promised to be donated to the covered person for use or transfer for campaign media spending on the date the covered person makes the report.
- The identity of each donor of original monies who contributed, directly or indirectly, more than \$5,000 of money or in-kind contributions for campaign media spending during the election cycle to the covered person, and the date and amount of each donor's contribution.

4. Filing Report and Public Access:

- Disclosures should be filed with the Arizona Secretary of State's office by emailing a .pdf copy to campaignfinance@azsos.gov.
- The VRKA filing will be posted on the See the Money/Spotlight.

6. Enforcement and Penalties:

- The Citizens Clean Elections Commission is the primary agency to implement and enforce this law. The Commission is authorized to adopt and enforce rules, issue civil subpoenas, initiate enforcement actions, conduct fact-finding hearings and investigations, impose civil penalties for noncompliance and seek legal and equitable relief in court.
- The Citizens Clean Elections Commission may impose civil penalties to be at least as much as the amount of the improper contribution but not more than three times that amount and requires penalties to be deposited in the Clean Elections Fund to pay for implementing and enforcing campaign finance laws or for other Commission-approved purposes.

Conclusion

The Voter's Right to Know Act establishes that the People of Arizona have the right to know the original source of all major contributions used to pay, in whole or part, for campaign media spending. This right requires the prompt, accessible, comprehensible and public disclosure of the identity of all donors who give more than \$5,000 to fund campaign media spending in an election cycle and the source of those monies, regardless of whether the monies passed through one or more intermediaries. By mandating the disclosure of significant media expenditures, the law aims to provide voters with critical information about the financial influences shaping their elections.