



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

PETER C. FOY, Chair
STEVE BENNETT
KATHY I. LONG
LINDA PARKS
JOHN C. ZARAGOZA

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF VENTURA

GOVERNMENT CENTER, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
800 SOUTH VICTORIA AVENUE, VENTURA, CALIFORNIA 93009

April 14, 2015

Board of Supervisors
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: Recommendation of Supervisors Bennett and Long to Adopt Revisions to the Ventura County Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance; Read Ordinance in Title and Set April 21st at 10:00 AM as Date for Ordinance Adoption

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. On April 14, 2015, introduce and read in title only an ordinance (Exhibit "A") repealing and reenacting Article 6, Chapter 2, Division 1 of the Ventura County Ordinance Code, Section 1261 et seq., Regarding Local Campaign Finance Reform, waive further reading, and place the ordinance on the Board of Supervisors agenda for April 21, 2015; and
2. On April 21st, 2015 at 10:00 AM adopt the ordinance.

DISCUSSION:

As we have each spring of an odd numbered year, we are proposing a number of revisions to the Ventura County Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance (Ordinance). There are very limited changes to the rules that candidates must follow. The revisions are primarily focused around a new approach to the enforcement of the ordinance. Instead of a three-member Ethics Commission and an Initial Review Attorney and Investigating Attorneys monitored by the CEO's office, this revision creates a Compliance Officer who is charged with coordinating the investigations and a Hearing Officer serving as the neutral party to hear a case and render a final decision.

These revisions are intended to simplify and streamline the complaint adjudication process, reduce costs, reduce the work effort and decrease uncertainty for candidates, complainants, campaign committees, the public and County staff. Other revisions were made to better conform the Ordinance to State law, current court rulings, and County practices. These include: the Purpose section was revised to improve consistency with current court cases; deleting of the definition of "sponsored committee" and "sponsored" because these terms are well defined in State law; revising the section on spousal contributions to refer to State law; revising the expenditure limit to reflect the current amounts as adjusted by the Clerk; adding definitions of Primary and General Election Cycles; updating references to Committees to

comport with current State law and regulations; and lowering the threshold for mandatory electronic filing from \$3,000 to \$1,000.

These revisions should be adopted in advance of the next campaign cycle, which commences in June. The adoption of these revisions will streamline ordinance administration and complaint handling, conform the ordinance to new State laws and court decisions, and reduce the cost of ordinance compliance and administration.

With these revisions, the Ventura County Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance will be set to continue to serve its purpose into its second decade.

This letter and ordinance have been reviewed by County Counsel.

Cordially,



Steve Bennett
Supervisor, First District



Kathy Long
Supervisor, Third District

Attachments:

Exhibit A: "clean" ordinance

Exhibit B: "redline" ordinance