

WSR 25-01-116

PERMANENT RULES

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION

[Filed December 16, 2024, 2:23 p.m., effective January 16, 2025]

Effective Date of Rule: Thirty-one days after filing.

Purpose: The rules clarify certain exemptions from sponsor identification requirements on political advertising, including implementation of HB 2032 (chapter 148, Laws of 2024), regarding sponsor identification on yard signs under four by eight feet.

Citation of Rules Affected by this Order: Amending WAC 390-18-030.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 42.17A.110 and [42.17A.]320.

Adopted under notice filed as WSR 24-22-056 on October 28, 2024.

Changes Other than Editing from Proposed to Adopted Version: Includes further clarification that the exemption from sponsor identification does not authorize the use of false or misleading sponsor identification.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Comply with Federal Statute: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Federal Rules or Standards: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Recently Enacted State Statutes: New 0, Amended 1, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted at the Request of a Nongovernmental Entity: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted on the Agency's own Initiative: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Clarify, Streamline, or Reform Agency Procedures: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted using Negotiated Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Pilot Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Other Alternative Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Date Adopted: December 16, 2024.

Sean Flynn
General Counsel

OTS-6023.2

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 20-02-062, filed 12/24/19, effective 1/24/20)

WAC 390-18-030 Advertising—Exemptions from sponsor identification and alternatives for online advertising. (1) RCW 42.17A.320 requires that political advertising must identify certain information. The commission is authorized to exempt advertising where the sponsor identification disclosures required by RCW 42.17A.320 (1) and (2) are impractical. In addition, other political advertising is exempt from providing certain disclosures. Political advertising may not include incorrect, false, or misleading sponsor identification whether or not sponsor identification is exempt under this section.

(2) (a) The following forms of advertising need not include the sponsor's name and address, the "no candidate authorized this ad" sponsor identification, the "top five contributors," "top three donors

to PAC contributors," or the identification of the individual, corporation, union, association, or other entity that established, maintains, or controls the sponsoring political committee as otherwise required by RCW 42.17A.320 (1) and (2) and 42.17A.350:

~~((a))~~ (i) Campaign paraphernalia, including novelty or sundry items intended for individual distribution and use, with a printing surface area smaller than ~~((4" x 15"))~~ 60 square inches, including expandable surface area such as a balloon when expanded, or where such identification is otherwise impractical to provide a readable text;

~~((b))~~ (ii) Newspaper ads of one column inch or less (excluding online ads);

~~((c))~~ (iii) Reader boards where a message is affixed in movable letters, or skywriting; and

~~((d))~~ (iv) State or local voter's pamphlets published pursuant to law ~~((; and))~~.

~~((e))~~ (b) Yard signs ~~((—size 4' x 8' or smaller))~~ must include sponsor identification, but need not include "top five contributors" or "top three donors to PAC contributors."

(3) Online political advertising must provide the same disclosures that apply to non-online advertising to the extent practical. As an alternative, small online advertising may provide the required disclosures by using an automatic display with the advertising that takes the reader directly to the required disclosures.

(a) These automatic displays must be clear and conspicuous, unavoidable, immediately visible, remain visible for at least four seconds, and display a color contrast as to be legible. Online advertising that includes only audio must include the disclosures in a manner that is clearly spoken.

(b) Examples include nonblockable pop-ups, roll-overs, a separate text box or link that automatically appears with or in the advertising that automatically takes the reader directly to the required disclosures upon being clicked once, or other similar mechanisms that disclose the information required in RCW 42.17A.320 in a manner that is compatible with the device and technology used to display the advertising.

(4) Political advertising created and distributed by an individual using their own modest resources is not required to provide the disclosures in RCW 42.17A.320, when all of the following criteria are satisfied:

(a) The individual spends in the aggregate less than ~~((one hundred dollars))~~ \$100 to produce and distribute the advertising or less than ~~((fifty dollars))~~ \$50 to produce and distribute online advertising;

(b) The individual acts independently and not as an agent of a candidate, authorized committee, political committee, corporation, union, business association, or other organization or entity;

(c) The advertising is not a contribution under RCW 42.17A.005 (16) (a) (ii) or (iii) or WAC 390-05-210;

(d) The individual does not receive donations, contributions, or payments from others for the advertising, and is not compensated for producing or distributing the advertising; and

(e) The advertising is either:

(i) A letter, flier, handbill, text, email or other digital communications from the individual that does not appear in a newspaper or other similar mass publication (except for letters to the editor and similar communications addressed in WAC 390-05-490(4)); or

(ii) Disseminated on the individual's social media site, personal website, or an individual's similar online forum where information is produced and disseminated only by the individual.

(5) Political advertising that is internal political communications to members is not required to separately include the disclosures in RCW 42.17A.320 where the sponsor's name is otherwise apparent on the face of the communication.