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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **HB 5457**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE FILINGS.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill makes the following three changes to campaign finance laws:

1. requires various entities to file certain campaign financial disclosure statements with the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC), rather than the town clerk;
2. modifies an existing exemption for refiling registration statements for certain political committees to conform to these changes and current practice; and
3. requires that municipal campaign financial disclosure statements and all registration statements be filed with SEEC through a web-based program (i.e., eCRIS).

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2025

#### **FILING MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS**

The bill requires the following entities to file financial disclosure statements, or exemption certifications, with SEEC rather than with the town clerk:

1. exploratory, candidate, and political state committees for municipal candidates;
2. political committees for referendum questions to be voted on by a single municipality and
3. a slate of candidates in a primary election for justice of the peace.

Existing law generally requires filing disclosure statements if they

spend or receive over \$1,000. Additionally, since these statements will no longer be filed with the town clerks, the bill eliminates related requirements that SEEC prepare, print, and provide campaign financial disclosure forms to the town clerks and that unsalaried town clerks receive ten cents from the town for each filing. The bill also removes obsolete language referencing individual lobbyists filing with SEEC. In practice, lobbyists register with the Office of State Ethics (CGS § 1-94).

### **REGISTRATION EXEMPTION**

The bill also modifies an existing exemption to the requirement that certain political committees reregister with SEEC. Under current law, political committees required to file with SEEC must file a registration statement (1) within 10 days after organization and (2) by November 15 of each even-numbered year. The bill exempts political committees established solely for (1) aiding or promoting candidates for municipal office or (2) the success or defeat of a referendum question. In practice, these political committees are generally not subject to the refiling requirement.

### **FILING OF REGISTRATION STATEMENTS ONLINE**

The bill also requires that (1) municipal campaign financial disclosure statements for candidate and exploratory committees and (2) all registration statements, be filed via a web-based program created by SEEC (i.e., eCRIS).

Under current law, treasurers for candidates and committees for certain state offices and committees required to file with the commission must use eCRIS. Additionally, under current law, registration statements must be filed electronically or manually with the proper authority (i.e., SEEC or the town clerk). The law also allows SEEC to waive the requirement to file electronically for good cause (CGS § 9-605).

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 17 Nay 2 (03/28/2022)