



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION
1102 Q Street • Suite 3050 • Sacramento, CA 95811

To: Chair Silver and Commissioners Brandt, Ortiz, and Wilson

From: Dave Bainbridge, General Counsel
Jenna Rinehart, Senior Commission Counsel

Subject: **Prenotice Discussion of Proposed Regulation 18420.5**

Date: May 4, 2026

Executive Summary

Section 84205 of the Political Reform Act (the “Act”)¹ provides that the Commission may, by regulation or written advice, permit candidates and committees to combine campaign reports when filing as required by the Act.² The Commission does not currently have a regulation permitting candidates and committees to file combined campaign reports. Staff proposes a new Regulation 18420.5 clarifying the circumstances in which candidates and committees are permitted to file combined campaign reports. Staff presents this proposed regulation for pre-notice discussion, with adoption proposed for the August 2026 Commission meeting.

Reason for Proposed Regulatory Action

This proposed regulation arose from suggestions by Legal Division staff. Staff are proposing the Commission adopt a regulation to formalize the criteria and process for when candidates and committees are permitted to file combined campaign reports. The regulation will streamline the process to permit candidates and committees to file combined campaign reports when the reporting periods for the required campaign reports overlap, or when a report which covers a later period is due before a report that covers an earlier period, and when doing so

¹ The Political Reform Act is contained in Government Code Sections 81000 through 91014. All statutory references are to the Government Code, unless otherwise indicated. The regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission are contained in Sections 18104 through 18998 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations. All regulatory references are to Title 2, Division 6 of the California Code of Regulations, unless otherwise indicated.

² Assembly Bill 808 (Addis) replaced the term “campaign statements” with “campaign reports” in Section 84205.

would not reduce or delay disclosure of campaign information required to be disclosed pursuant to the Act.

Background

In 1985, the Legislature adopted Section 84205 which provided that the Commission may, by regulation or written advice, permit candidates and committees to combine campaign reports when filing as required by the Act. Since 1985, Commission staff has provided formal written advice, on at least 94 separate occasions, permitting candidates and committees to file combined campaign reports when filing pursuant to a filing schedule approved by Commission staff.³

In 2007, pursuant to Section 84205, the Commission adopted former Regulation 18420.5. Former Regulation 18420.5 required candidates for elective state office being voted on in the February 5, 2008 statewide election and any recipient committees primarily formed to support or oppose a candidate or ballot measure being voted on in that election to file a combined campaign report. The required combined campaign report covered the overlapping reporting periods for a semi-annual and preelection campaign report. The regulation included an approved filing schedule for this combined campaign report. Former Regulation 18420.5 was repealed in 2011 and no other regulations for combined campaign reports have been adopted by the Commission.

Adopting a regulation for a specific election that results in overlapping reporting periods, as the Commission did with former Regulation 18420.5, is not an efficient practice as it is time-consuming to adopt a regulation that only applies to a single election. The proposed regulation being presented here provides the general parameters and procedures to permit candidates and committees to file combined campaign reports administratively, when Commission staff determines doing so would not reduce or delay disclosure. The proposed regulation, if approved, will give Commission staff flexibility to permit the filing of combined campaign reports in a much more efficient and expeditious manner.

Since there is currently no regulation outlining when candidates and committees are permitted to file combined campaign reports, formal written advice must be requested for each election pursuant to Section 83114, subdivision (b). The current process consists of a candidate, committee, or elections official submitting a request for permission to file a combined campaign report and/or for an approved filing schedule which notes the option for filing a combined

³ The first advice letter issued permitting candidates and committees to file a combined campaign report pursuant to Section 84205 was dated February 16, 1988. (See *Hong* Advice Letter, A-88-072.) On July 28, 1987, a Commission Opinion was issued permitting candidates and committees to file a combined campaign report pursuant to Section 84205. (See *In the Matter of: Opinion Requested by: Elwood Lui, Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District and President, California Judges Association; Harlan K. Veal, Judge, Superior Court, County of San Mateo; and Robert P. Ahern, Judge, Superior Court of Santa Clara*, No. 87-001.)

campaign report. In response to this type of request, Legal Division staff will issue a formal advice letter permitting candidates and committee to file a combined campaign report that combines campaign reporting periods when combined reporting might be more convenient and would not reduce or delay disclosure. In addition to the formal advice letter, Legal Division staff also prepares a filing schedule for the relevant election which includes the option for filing a combined campaign report and provides that filing schedule to the requestor and/or the elections official in the jurisdiction holding the election.

The reporting periods for regularly scheduled primary and general elections do not typically overlap. However, elections occurring on alternative dates such as special state and local elections, often result in reporting periods that overlap in such a way that it makes sense for committees to file combined campaign reports. Additionally, these special elections sometimes result in a campaign report for a later reporting period being due prior to a campaign report that covers an earlier reporting period, and it is more convenient for committees to file combined campaign reports.

Most recently, for example, the County of Marin held a special election on January 27, 2026 and the County's filing official requested permission to allow committees to file combined campaign reports prior to the election. Pursuant to Section 84200, the year-end semi-annual campaign report for 2025, covering the reporting period through December 31, was due on February 2, 2026. Pursuant to Section 84200.8, the first pre-election campaign report, due December 18, 2025, covered the reporting period through December 13, 2025, and the second pre-election campaign report covered the reporting period of December 14, 2025 through January 10, 2026 and was due on January 15, 2026, before the due date for the semi-annual campaign report. In response to the request, on November 25, 2025, the Legal Division issued the *Miller* Advice Letter, A-25-157, which permitted committees involved in the County of Marin January 27, 2026 special election to combine the semi-annual and the second pre-election campaign statements to cover the period of December 14, 2025 through January 10, 2026 by the January 15, 2026 due date. An approved filing schedule that noted this combined campaign report was created and provided with the formal advice letter. (See attached *Miller* Advice Letter, A-25-157, and accompanying approved filing schedule.)

Proposed Regulatory Action

18420.5. Combined Campaign Reports

The proposed regulation would codify the process for when candidates and committees are permitted to file combined campaign reports. Instead of requiring a formal advice letter to permit candidates and committees to file combined campaign reports, under the proposed regulation they would be permitted to file combined campaign reports pursuant to a filing schedule issued by the Commission.

Conclusion

Staff presents proposed Regulation 18420.5 for the Commission's consideration and anticipates adoption at the August Commission meeting.

Attachments:

Former Regulation 18420.5 (repealed April 21, 2011)

***Miller* Advice Letter, A-25-157 and accompanying approved filing schedule**

Proposed Regulation 18420.5