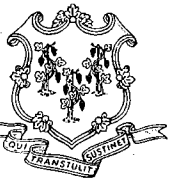


About the Commission

In the wake of the Watergate scandal, the Connecticut General Assembly created a five member bi-partisan and independent State Elections Commission (Public Act 74-213) to ensure the integrity of the state's electoral process. The Commission was given the authority to investigate possible violations of the election laws, inspect campaign finance records and reports, refer evidence of violations to the Chief State's Attorney or to the Attorney General, issue advisory opinions and make recommendations to the General Assembly concerning revisions to the state's election laws. Appointments to the Commission are divided equally amongst the Governor and the four highest ranking leaders of the General Assembly.

In its first year of operations, the Commission was given a budget of \$50,000. and utilized staff loaned by the Secretary of the State, temporary and summer workers. Until April 1975, the Commission conducted its activities without the benefit of a permanent office. Since 1974, the Commission's investigative and enforcement authority has grown. It has full subpoena power, can impound voting machines and absentee ballots, require a forfeiture of contributions or payments and impose civil penalties against violators. The Commission's enabling authority can be found in §§ 9-7a and 9-7b, General Statutes.

The Commission currently has a permanent full time staff, with eleven authorized positions, headed by the Executive Director and General Counsel. More than 200 investigations are conducted each year, with sanctions imposed in approximately two-thirds of the cases. Commission staff responds to thousands of requests for oral and written advice. It regularly conducts training sessions for candidates, campaign treasurers and others concerning campaign finance requirements. Agency publications are available in both English and Spanish. Each year, the Commission makes recommendations to the General Assembly for revising election laws.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
20 Trinity Street – Suite 101 • Hartford, Connecticut 06106 - 1628

SUMMARY OF SEEC LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1974-1999

1974

PA 74-213 An Act Concerning the Creation of a State Elections Commission

- Creates the 5 member Commission with authority to investigate possible election law violations hold hearings, issue subpoenas, refer evidence to the Chief State's Attorney, inspect campaign records, issue advisory opinions and recommend revisions to election laws.
- \$50,000 Appropriation

1975

PA 75-202 An Act Concerning Voluntary Compliance with Election Laws

- Expands Commission's powers to include securing voluntary compliance by informal methods

PA 75-273 An Act Concerning Permitted Campaign Expenditures

- Allows Commission to determine what campaigns expenses are permitted by issuing regulations

PA 75-571 An Act Revising The Campaign Finance Laws

- Allows organizations to make campaign contributions, prohibits contributions by candidate committees to other committees, allows aggregate reporting of individual contributions of \$15 or less, imposes limit on anonymous contributions, revises individual contribution limits and requires more frequent reporting by committees.

1976

PA 76-264 An Act Concerning a Minimum Threshold for Reporting Under the Campaign Finance Laws

- Establishes \$500 aggregate threshold for candidates and PACs before itemized campaign reporting is required

PA 76-270 An Act Concerning the Disposition of Campaign Deficits and Surpluses

- Requires distribution of surplus within 90 days following election, requires more frequent reporting of campaign deficits

PA 76-275 An Act Conforming Chapter 150 to the U.S. Supreme Court Decision Concerning Campaign Financing

- To conform to Buckley v. Valeo decision, the terms contribution and expenditure are differentiated; expenditure limitations on candidates' campaigns are repealed as are restrictions on candidates use of personal funds; independent expenditures are permitted

1977

PA 77-158 An Act Concerning Expenditures Permitted by Individuals, Stock Corporations, Business Organizations and Other Organizations

- Limits corporate and organization contributions to a referendum committee

1978

PA 78-61, 78-106 An Act Concerning the State Elections Commission's Duties and Powers

- Expands Commission's investigative authority to include primaries and referenda, and enables Commission to refer evidence to the Attorney General for equitable relief so that the results of an election, primary or referendum can be set aside by the courts

PA 78-125 An Act Concerning Election Complaints and the Revision of Primary Petition Circulation to Preclude Possible Fraud

- Imposes additional safeguards concerning petition circulation, increases opportunities for registering complaints with the court concerning improper rulings or ballot counts, increases authority of court to order election remedies

1979

PA 79-381 An Act Concerning the Filing of Campaign Statements and Reports

- Raises threshold for itemization for any fundraising affair, prohibits rollover of surplus from a candidate committee to PAC established to finance the future campaigns of the same candidate

1980

PA-80-212 An Act Empowering the State Elections Commission to Levy a Civil Penalty Against Violators of the Campaign Finance Laws

- Authorizes the Commission to impose a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation against any violator of CT's Campaign Finance Laws. Commission must comply with Uniform Administrative Procedure Act before imposing penalty. Limits referrals to Chief State's Attorney to knowing and willful violations

PA 80-223 An Act Concerning Contributions to Candidates for Municipal Offices

- Limits contributions to municipal candidates for the first time

PA 80-271 An Act Concerning Political Advertising

- Requires identification of sponsorship on printed campaign communications, and authorizes Commission to impose civil penalty for non-compliance

PA 80-432 An Act Providing Penalties for Neglect or Fraud in the Performance of Duties relating to Primaries and Limits on Contributions by Certain Continuing Political Committees

- Cures void in criminal law by applying penalties for election official fraud or neglect arising from primaries
- Limits contributions by business PAC's to candidates, and in the aggregate to all candidates

1981**PA 81-357 An Act Revising the Provisions of Connecticut 's Campaign Finance Laws**

- Simplifies categories of committees, allows for exploratory committee for candidate who was undecided about which office to run for, establishes one candidate one committee rule to avoid circumvention of contribution limits, increases information concerning PACs, prohibits distribution of candidate campaign surplus to PACs

PA 81-359 An Act Empowering the State Elections Commission to Levy a Civil Penalty for Violations of Absentee Ballot and Petition Requirements

- Expands Commission's authority to impose civil penalties of up to \$1000 for violations of absentee ballot and petition requirements

PA 81-424 An Act Concerning Absentee Voting by Persons Who are Ill or Disabled and the Checking Procedure for Absentee Ballots

- Requires supervision by registrars of persons in nursing homes and other institutions when casting absentee ballots to prevent fraud

PA 81-434 An Act Concerning the Use of Public Funds to Influence the Outcome of a Referendum Question and the Location of Political Advertising Materials

- Prohibits use of public funds to influence outcome of referendum to ensure fairness

PA 81-467 An Act Concerning Controls on the Administration of Elections and Primaries

- Increases maximum criminal penalty for violations of campaign finance laws from one to five years imprisonment, and from \$1,000 to \$5,000 fine (class D felony); also establishes right to challenge absentee ballot of polling place

1982**PA 82-54 An Act Concerning Persons Who are Guarantors of Loans to Political Candidates**

- Requires disclosure of those who guaranty loans to candidates, allows candidate committee to share costs of joint advertising on a proportionate basis

PA 82-176 An Act Concerning Fraudulent Voting and Intimidation of Voters

- Cures void in criminal law by applying same penalty for fraudulent voting in primaries that applies to elections

1983**PA 83-336 An Act Concerning Limitations on Contributions Made by Political Committees**

- Imposes for the first time PAC contribution limits to municipal candidates

PA 83-410 An Act Prohibiting Solicitation of Campaign Funds by Certain State Officials

- Prohibits commissioners and deputy commissioners of state agencies from soliciting contributions for state and local candidates, and political parties

PA 83-583 An Act Permitting the State Election Commission to Intervene in Actions Brought to Contest an Election or Primary

- Authorizes Commission intervention in court actions brought by candidate to challenge results of elections or primaries; required notice of all such court actions be given to Commission to facilitate intervention when necessary to prepare evidence of possible criminal violations

1984**PA 84-437 An Act Imposing Penalties for the Misuse of Public Funds by an Incumbent in Connection with his Campaign and Empowering the State Elections Commission to Issue Orders Concerning Unlawful Campaign Contributions**

- Increases Commission's enforcement authority by allowing it to issue orders requiring that unlawful campaign contributions or payments be returned or forfeited to the state; expands Commission's civil penalty authority to prohibition on misuse of public funds by incumbent

PA 84-511 An Act Concerning Testimonial Affairs, Expenditures by Candidate Committees, Political Committees and Solicitors and a Change in the Name of the State Elections Commission

- Strengthens law on testimonials to require disclosure, and subjects them to contribution limits; prohibits candidates from being compensated by PACs, imposes controls on those soliciting contributions, and name of agency changes to SEEC to avoid confusion with Elections Division of Secretary of the State

1985**PA 85-274 An Act Concerning Certification of Moderators**

- Strengthens requirements for election moderators to facilitate smooth conduct of elections

PA 85-489 An Act Concerning the Preservation and Destruction of Absentee Ballots

- Expands Commission's authority to use subpoena power to prevent destruction of absentee ballot material to facilitate investigation

PA 85-514 An Act Concerning Distribution of Absentee Ballot Applications

- Prohibits payment of compensation for distributing applications or for assistance in completion of absentee ballots

1986**PA 86-1 An Act Permitting the Elections Enforcement Commission to Impound Voting Machines**

- Expands Commission's authority by allowing it to impound machines to complete investigation and to issue order requiring town clerk to unlock machine when necessary to investigate complaint

PA 86-99 An Act Making Technical Revisions to the Campaign Finance Laws

- Recodifies, rewrites campaign finance laws in plain language

PA 86-240 An Act Concerning the Appointment of Deputy Campaign Treasurers by State Central Committees, Contribution Limits for Candidates for Municipal Office, and Studies of the Campaign Finance Laws

- Revises certain contribution limits for municipal candidates from \$1,000 to \$250; requires joint study by State Elections Enforcement Commission and State Ethics Commission of the relationship of the campaign finance laws to the codes of ethics for public officials and lobbyists

PA 86-412 An Act Concerning Imposition of Civil Penalties for Violations of Certain Election Laws

- Expands Commission's authority to levy civil penalties of up to \$1,000 for violations pertaining to conduct of elections, preparation of voting machines, handicapped access, etc.

1987**PA 87-264 An Act Concerning Financial Reporting for Primary Elections**

- Extends disclosure provisions of campaign finance laws to town committee and delegate primaries

PA 87-524 An Act Concerning Political Contributions by Lobbyists to Members of the General Assembly

- Requires identification of PACs formed by registered lobbyists, disclosure of lobbyist status of contributors on campaign reports, that individuals who are registered lobbyists file annual campaign reports, and that occupation and employer's name of contributor of more than \$1,000 be disclosed

PA 87-530 An Act Concerning Circulation of Election Petitions

- New crime established for misrepresentation of contents of an election related petition

PA 87-532 An Act Reforming the Absentee Ballot Process

- Requires accountability in distribution of absentee ballot applications, expands requirement for mandatory supervision of absentee ballots at nursing homes, and expands Commission's authority to investigate complaints concerning town committee and delegate primaries

PA 87-545 An Act Concerning Judicial Hearings Concerning Absentee Ballots

- Requires automatic court hearing on an election when candidate claims absentee ballot violations; expands time frame to bring court action contesting a primary

1988**PA 88-113 An Act Concerning Election Contests by Individuals**

- Permits an individual to contest a referendum in court without having to exhaust administrative remedies

PA 88-344 An Act Concerning the Witnessing of Voter Registration Applications

- Strengthens requirements for mail-in voter registration to preclude fraud and insure greater accountability

1989**PA 89-5 An Act Concerning Notice of Restrictions on Possession of Completed Absentee Ballots**

- Requires notice on outer envelope for reforming absentee of who can lawfully handle completed ballot and penalties for violations

PA 89-159 An Act Concerning Enforcement of Prohibition Against Use of Public Funds to Advocate a Position on a Referendum

- Clarifies that no public funds can be used to advocate position on referendum and authorizes Commission to impose a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 or twice the amount of the expenditure, with no right of indemnification of the state or municipal official

1990**PA 90-267 An Act Concerning Political Contributions by Registered Lobbyists**

- Prohibits lobbyists and lobbyist PACs from soliciting or contributing to General Assembly candidates and their PACs during legislative sessions

1991**PA 91-351 An Act Concerning Campaign Financing of Delegates Involved in Primaries, Campaign Finance Reporting, In Kind Contributions, Surplus Campaign Funds, Mailing of Absentee Ballots**

- Imposes limits on contributions to candidates in primary for convention delegates, and prohibits corporate contributions to those primaries; requires treasurers to obtain occupation and employer's name for \$1,000 contributors or forfeit funds, requires in-kind valuation notice by PAC to candidate to facilitate disclosure

1992**PA 92-246 An Act Concerning Campaign Contributions**

- Requires disclosure of ad book receipts for fundraisers; requires contributors of over \$100 to be by personal check

1993**PA 93-192 An Act Concerning the Imposition of Civil Penalties by the State Elections Enforcement Commission and Notice of Campaign Treasurers Who Fail to File Campaign Reports**

- Increases Commission's authority to impose civil penalties from maximum of \$1,000 to \$2,000 per offense

PA 93-251 An Act Concerning Lobbyist Contributions

- Strengthens existing lobbyist contribution ban by expanding coverage to activities exempt from being considered contributions under campaign finance laws, and strengthens annual disclosure of lobbyists campaign contributions by including purchases not otherwise considered contributions

PA 93-300 An Act Concerning Voter Identification at the Polls

- Requires for the first time a voter to present identification before voting or sign a statement of authenticity

1994**PA 94-102 An Act Concerning Members and Employees of the Elections Enforcement Commission**

- Strengthens restrictions on political activities by Commission members and staff

PA 94-121 An Act Concerning the Implementation of the National Voter Registration Act

- Among many changes, provides that Elections Enforcement Commission be responsible for investigating and enforcing provisions of the NVRA

1995**PA 95-122 An Act Authorizing the State Elections Enforcement Commission to Impose Civil Penalties for Wrongful Denial of Voting Rights and For Violations Concerning Recanvass and Identification at the Polls**

- Expands Commission's authority to impose civil penalty of up to \$2000 for these violations

PA 95-177 An Act Concerning the Integrity of the Absentee Ballot Process

- Strengthens accountability in distribution of absentee ballot application by requiring the person providing direct assistance to the applicant to sign name and address; cures void in criminal statute

PA 95-188 An Act Concerning the Integrity of the Office of the Treasurer

- Imposes prohibition on any owners and key personnel of an investment services firm doing business with the State Treasurer, or any PAC established by such firm, from soliciting or making contributions to any campaign for State Treasurer

PA 95-276 An Act Concerning Permissible Campaign Expenditures by Committees and Attribution on Political Advertising

- Imposes prohibition on personal use of campaign funds by candidate, and on payment of compensation to candidate's immediate family

1996**PA 96-207 An Act Concerning Forfeiture and Restoration of Voting Rights**

- Strengthens procedures regarding convicted felons

1997**PA 97-107 An Act Strengthening Enforcement of Election Laws**

- Raises amount of civil penalty the SEEC can impose to \$2000 or twice the amount of the improper contribution or payment ; authorizes removal of treasurer or solicitor

PA 97-154 An Act Amending the Election Laws

- Expands jurisdiction of SEEC to investigate violations occurring at primaries held pursuant to *Special Acts*

PA 97-176 An Act Reforming Absentee Voting Laws to Protect Against Abuses

- Prohibits candidates, agents of a candidate, political party or PAC from being present while voter casts an absentee ballot

PA 97-5, June 18 Special Session An Act Concerning Campaign Finance Reform

- Requires candidates for statewide office after January 1999, and who raise \$250,000 or more to file campaign reports electronically, and permits other committees to do so; lowers threshold for disclosure of individual contributors occupation and employer to \$101; requires individuals making independent expenditures of more than \$1,000 to file disclosure statements; extends lobbyist contribution ban during sessions to statewide candidates and their PACs; limits contributions by minors under 16 to \$30

1998**PA 98-7 An Act Prohibiting the Receipt of "Soft Money" Funds From National Political Parties by State Parties and PACs**

- Limits transfers from national parties to state parties and PACs to funds subject to Federal limits (no corporate, union treasury funds, limited individual contributions)

PA 98-67 An Act Concerning Election Procedures

- Requires test voting and sealing in machine preparation that registrars must conduct prior to election

1999**PA 99-12 An Act Prohibiting Government Sponsored Promotional Campaigns Featuring Candidates for Public Office**

- Prohibits candidates from appearing in publicly funded television radio, newspaper or magazine ads during 5 months prior to election

PA 99-147 An Act Concerning Corrupt Election Practices

- Prohibits favors of any kind offered by candidates to anyone for signing an election related petition

PA 99-275 An Act Concerning Candidate Related Advertisements

- Regulates "sham issue ads" featuring candidates within 3 months of election by requiring ads to be funded by permissible sources under campaign finance laws, and subject to disclosure requirements

PA 99-276 An Act Concerning Minor Changes to Election Laws

- Requires voter identification at referenda