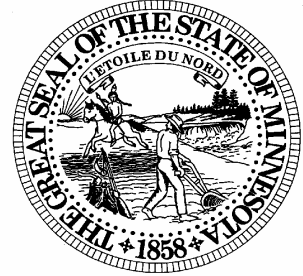


Minnesota

Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board



**THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATION DOES NOT IDENTIFY THE
REQUESTER OF THE ADVISORY OPINION, WHICH IS NON PUBLIC DATA
under Minn. Stat. § 10A.02, subd. 12(b)**

RE: Multicandidate Political Party Expenditures

ADVISORY OPINION 377

SUMMARY

Expenditures by a political party unit for party staff services and internet based fundraising efforts that benefit three or more candidates may be classified as multicandidate expenditures and are not contributions to any candidate.

FACTS

As representative for a major political party (the Party) registered with the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board (the Board) you request an advisory opinion based on the following:

1. The Party may hire personnel for the 2006 election that have as a part of their job duties will engage in services that benefit three or more candidates for constitutional or legislative office.
2. The Party maintains an Internet website (Internet) on which individuals may contribute directly to candidates that are registered with the Board. Funds contributed to a candidate on the website are transferred directly into an account that is maintained and is accessible only by the candidate that receives the contribution. At no time are the contributions under the control of the Party. The website provides the option of donating to three or more constitutional or legislative candidates.

ISSUE ONE

Must a multicandidate political party expenditure for party committee staff services be provided in a way that benefits each candidate in approximately equal amounts?

OPINION ONE

No. Minnesota Statutes, section 10A.275, requires only that multicandidate political party expenditures for staff services benefit three or more candidates.

ISSUE TWO

Is the Party's Internet based fund raising effort a multicandidate political party expenditure?

OPINION TWO

Yes. As provided in the facts of this advisory opinion the Internet based fund raising effort benefits three or more candidates. Contributions made through the Party's Internet site are deposited directly into the accounts of candidates; therefore the fundraising effort is also in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 10A.16, which prohibits the earmarking of contributions.

Issued March 13, 2006



Bob Milbert, Chair
Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board

Cited Statutes and Administrative Rules

10A.275 Multicandidate political party expenditures.

Subdivision 1. **Exceptions.** Notwithstanding other provisions of this chapter, the following expenditures by a party unit, or two or more party units acting together, with at least one party unit being either: the state committee or the party organization within a congressional district, county, or legislative district, are not considered contributions to or expenditures on behalf of a candidate for the purposes of section 10A.25 or 10A.27 and must not be allocated to candidates under section 10A.20, subdivision 3, paragraph (g):

- (1) expenditures on behalf of candidates of that party generally without referring to any of them specifically in a published, posted, or broadcast advertisement;
- (2) expenditures for the preparation, display, mailing, or other distribution of an official party sample ballot listing the names of three or more individuals whose names are to appear on the ballot;
- (3) expenditures for a telephone conversation including the names of three or more individuals whose names are to appear on the ballot;
- (4) expenditures for a political party fund-raising effort on behalf of three or more candidates; or
- (5) expenditures for party committee staff services that benefit three or more candidates.