

September 28, 2018

Ms. Anne Levinson
Chairwoman
Washington State Public Disclosure Commission
711 Capitol Way S., #206
Olympia, WA 98504-0908

Dear Chairwoman Levinson,

I am the executive director of the Pacific Printing Industries Association, a trade organization representing commercial printing and visual communications businesses here in Washington state. I am writing in opposition to the Public Disclosure Commission's proposed administrative rule that would require printers to post on-line their pricing information for any political printing.

PPI has members in communities throughout the state. Candidates for elected office routinely bring their campaign-related business to local printers. These candidates include those who run for state legislative, county, city, school board, port district, public utility district, and water and sewer district offices.

After reviewing this proposal, PPI members express to you our staunch opposition for two reasons.

1) The PDC's On-Line Posting Requirement Rule Proposal Goes Beyond Current Law

The PDC *does not* have the statutory authority to impose these proposed requirements on printing businesses. RCW 42.17a.345 is exceptionally clear and prescriptive (bold text added for emphasis):

*(1) Each commercial advertiser who has accepted or provided political advertising or electioneering communications during the election campaign shall maintain documents and books of account that shall be **open for public inspection during normal business hours during the campaign** and for a period of no less than three years after the date of the applicable election. The documents and books of account shall specify:*

(a) The names and addresses of persons from whom it accepted political advertising or electioneering communications;

(b) The exact nature and extent of the services rendered; and

(c) The total cost and the manner of payment for the services.

(2) At the request of the commission, each commercial advertiser required to comply with subsection (1) of this section shall deliver to the commission copies of the information that must be maintained and be open for public inspection pursuant to subsection (1) of this section.

Again, RCW 42.17a.345 is clear and prespective – existing law only requires printing businesses who provide services to campaigns to make available for public inspection their financial records for political advertising or electioneering communications *during normal business hours*. Additionally, on-line posting is not expressly authorized by statute. The proposal to require on-line posting clearly exceeds the PDC’s authority as authorized in statute.

2) A Serious Competitive Disadvantage Is Created By This Proposal

Consider the impact the proposed rule would have on a printer who has just one political candidate as a customer:

- The pricing of any printer who provides political printed material must be posted on the internet;
- This printer has effectively disclosed their pricing structure for all of the printing work they perform – both political and non-political;
- Competitors will easily access the on-line posting of political printers’ financial information; and
- With this information in hand, non-political printers will have an exceptional competitive advantage as they will easily outbid those printers who have candidates for customers when seeking business from local non-profit organizations, public agencies and businesses.

The serious competitive disadvantage is real and substantial for any of our members who perform political printing.

For these two reasons, PPI opposes the PDC’s proposal.

If you have any questions, please contact our governmental relations representative, Bill Stauffacher, at (253) 209-4301.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jules Van Sant
Executive Director

cc: All 49 members of the Washington State Senate
All 98 members of the Washington State House of Representatives