

**Written Testimony before Senate Elections and Local Government Committee
in Support of Senate Bill 77
by Carol Williams, Executive Director
January 29, 2015**

The Governmental Ethics Commission stands in support of SB 77 which raises the fees that candidates, political action committees, and lobbyists pay to the Governmental Ethics Commission fee fund. An increase in fees has been a recommendation by the Governmental Ethics Commission in its Annual Report and Recommendations the since 2011.

As background information, the Commission became a fee agency in 1991. The legislature established a fee fund for the Commission to provide supplemental funding for additional staff and other operating expenditures necessitated by legislation which brought all county and first class city candidates under the purview of the Campaign Finance Act. Fees were increased by the Kansas Legislature in 1994 and again in 2000.

Over the past decade, approximately one-third of the Commission's operations have been funded through the agency's fee fund. Recently, the Legislature has begun to use more and more of the Commission's fee fund to offset general fund appropriations. This year, approximately 39% of the agency's operations will be funded through the fee fund. If fees are not increased, the Commission's fee fund will be depleted in FY 2018.

Fees currently paid by candidates for the legislature, candidates for county office, first class city office, state board of education, district attorney, and district court judges would increase by \$15. There would be a \$170 increase in the fees paid by candidates running for statewide office.

Political action committees that receive more than \$2,500 in contributions per year

will see a \$60 increase. PACs that receive more than \$500 but less than \$2,501 in contributions in a calendar year will see their fees increase by \$15. PACs that receive less than \$500 a year in contributions will see their fees increase by \$5.

SB 77 will raise lobbyists fees also. A lobbyist who expends more than \$1,000 in a calendar year on reportable lobbying expenditures will see a \$50 increase. Lobbyists who spend \$1,000 or less per year will see an increase of \$15. Employees of lobbying firms will see their fees increase by \$90.

If SB 77 becomes law, \$51,210 in additional revenue will be generated in FY 2016, \$44,325 in FY 2017 and \$44,975 in FY 2018. To sustain the Commission's current level of operations past FY 2018, the Commission urges your support of SB 77.

Fee Changes

Candidates	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Statewide	\$480	\$650	\$170
All Other Candidates	35	50	15
Political Action Committees			
Receipts of more than \$2,501 each year	\$240	\$300	\$60
Receipts more than \$500 less than \$2,501	35	50	15
Receipts \$500 or less	20	25	5
Lobbyists			
Lobbyists spending more than \$1000/yr	\$300	\$350	50
Lobbyists spending \$1000 or less/yr	35	50	15
Employees of Lobbying Firms	360	450	90