



September 11, 2026

Chairman James Lankford
Vice Chairman Christopher A. Coons
United States Senate Committee on Ethics
220 Hart Building, United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Submitted via email (mailbox_office@ethics.senate.gov)

Dear Chairman Lankford and Vice Chairman Coons:

Campaign Legal Center ("CLC") respectfully requests that the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Ethics ("Ethics Committee") investigate the missing personal financial disclosure reports for at least 11 Senate candidates in 10 states. These individuals appear to have qualified as candidates pursuant to the Ethics in Government Act ("EIGA") but do not have the requisite candidate personal financial disclosures on file with the Senate Office of Public Records. All these candidates have won their primaries or have otherwise advanced to the general election in November. Half of the candidates represent one of the two major parties.

When candidates fail to file their financial disclosure reports accurately and on time, they deprive voters of crucial information about the financial interests of those who hope to represent them. In order to make an informed decision at the ballot box, voters need to know about any potential conflicts of interest their Senate candidates may have, and whether the claims made to voters align with their personal finances.

In some cases, the failure to accurately and timely file these reports puts even more at stake than the voters' informational interests. The missing or inaccurate reports can conceal critical details from the Ethics Committee or law enforcement, including facts about how a campaign for Senate is ultimately funded. For example, six of the candidates who have failed to file personal disclosure reports have reported making personal loans to their principal campaign committees.¹ Financial disclosure reports would indicate whether they have sufficient funds or assets to make those loans; absent those reports, voters, law enforcement, and the general public are deprived of information about the true sources of money used to

¹ One Senate candidate has almost entirely self-financed his campaign, with personal loans making up 85% of his campaign committee's total reported receipts. See Financial Summary, *Everett W. Wess for US Senate*, 2025-26, FEC, <https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00935783/?cycle=2026> (last visited Sep. 9, 2026).

influence their elections. Comparing financial disclosure reports with campaign finance records has repeatedly revealed critical information for voters and law enforcement.²

The Ethics Committee has previously enforced the requirement for candidates to file financial disclosures and referred knowing and willful violations to the Justice Department, even when the candidate lost the election.³ Now, in the wake of the expulsion of one member of Congress and the resignation of another due in part to fraudulent candidate financial disclosure reports,⁴ it is more important than ever for the Ethics Committee to transparently enforce the existing rules that govern missing, late, and inaccurate filings; reform internal processes that ensure timely filing; and provide updated, detailed guidance on requirements for filing financial disclosure reports.

I. Senate Candidates Are Required by Law to File Timely and Accurate Financial Disclosure Reports with the Secretary of the Senate

EIGA requires Senate candidates to file personal financial disclosure reports with the Secretary of the Senate “within 30 days of becoming a candidate” as defined in the Federal Campaign Act of 1971 or on or before May 15, whichever is later.⁵ Further, candidates must also file no later than 30 days before their election, including primaries.⁶ Candidates that qualify during non-election years likely owe two personal financial disclosure reports.⁷

A candidate is an individual who “seeks nomination for election, or election, to Federal office, and . . . has received contributions aggregating in excess of \$5,000 or has made

² See, e.g., Press Release, *Senator Ted Cruz Fined for Keeping Voters in the Dark About Over \$1 Million in Loans, Violating Federal Law*, Campaign Legal Ctr. (Mar. 19, 2019), <https://campaignlegal.org/update/senator-ted-cruz-fined-keeping-voters-dark-about-over-1-million-loans-violating-federal-law> (Senator fined by the FEC for reporting loans as coming from “personal funds” that were actually financed by bank loans); see also Mike McIntyre, *Ted Cruz Didn’t Report Goldman Sachs Loan in a Senate Race*, N.Y. Times (Jan. 13, 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/14/us/politics/ted-cruz-wall-street-loan-senate-bid-2012.html> (noting that the bank loans contradicted claims made to voters that the candidate had to “liquidate” his family’s “entire net worth” to finance his campaign).

³ See, e.g., *United States v. Tarver*, 642 F. Supp. 1109 (D. Wyo. 1986) (issuing civil penalties against a losing Senate candidate who failed to file a financial disclosure report in a matter the Senate Ethics Committee referred to the Attorney General).

⁴ Michael Gold and Grace Ashford, *George Santos Is Kicked Out of Congress in a Historic Vote*, N.Y. TIMES (Dec. 1, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/01/nyregion/santos-expulsion-vote-congress.html>; see also Annie Karni and Soumya Karlamangla, *Florida Democrat Resigns From Congress Just Before Panel Weighs Expelling Her*, N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 21, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/21/us/politics/cherfilus-mccormick-florida.html>.

⁵ 5 U.S.C. § 13103(c).

⁶ *Id.* See also U.S. Senate Select Committee on Ethics, Financial Disclosure Guide for Calendar Year 2025 at 4, 5 (2026), https://www.ethics.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/acfec831-2c03-4c3b-a020-e914de75a5b0/cy25-fd-instructions.pdf (“Senate FD Instructions”).

⁷ Senate FD Instructions at 5.

expenditures aggregating in excess of \$5,000.”⁸ Funds raised and spent while an individual is testing the waters for possible candidacy do not themselves trigger candidacy, but they do count toward the threshold once an individual decides to become a candidate.⁹

EIGA allows for “reasonable extensions of time for filing any report” by the supervising ethics authority, but the extensions cannot exceed 90 days.¹⁰ The Senate may not grant an extension after 30 days following a report’s due date.¹¹ A candidate filing their report more than 30 days after it is due must pay a \$200 penalty *unless waived by the Ethics Committee*; a waiver is granted only in extraordinary circumstances.¹²

Within 60 days of receiving a financial disclosure report, the Ethics Committee reviews it for timeliness and accuracy and to determine whether it “complies with applicable laws and Senate Rules.”¹³ The Ethics Committee may initiate action on their own or refer to the Attorney General if the reports show reasonable cause to believe knowing and willful violations of EIGA occurred.¹⁴ Anyone who knowingly and willfully “makes any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation” on their financial disclosure reports may face fines or imprisonment.¹⁵ “A statutory violation is knowing and willful when an individual intentionally disregards the statute or is indifferent to its requirements.”¹⁶

II. At Least 11 Senate Candidates in 10 States Have Failed to Timely File Required Personal Financial Disclosure Reports

At least 11 candidates competing in Senate races in 10 states appear to have met the threshold requirements for filing personal financial disclosure reports without filing those

⁸ 52 U.S.C. § 30101(2). Funds provided to the campaign from the candidate themselves count toward this threshold. See House Committee on Ethics 2026 Instruction Guide: Financial Disclosure Reports for Calendar Year 2025 and Periodic Transaction Reports FD Instructions at 9 (2026), <https://wordpress-1275988-6249768.cloudwaysapps.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/7-8-2026-2025-Published-Instruction-Guide.pdf> (“Funds loaned to a campaign from any source, including from themselves, as well as funds expended for state filing fees, count toward the \$5,000 threshold.”).

⁹ A candidate is no longer considered to be “testing the waters” when they file a Form 2 Statement of Candidacy with the Federal Election Commission (“FEC”). Testing the waters for possible candidacy, FEC, <https://www.fec.gov/help-candidates-and-committees/registering-candidate/testing-the-waters-possible-candidacy/> (last visited Sep. 2, 2026).

¹⁰ 5 U.S.C. § 13103(g)(1).

¹¹ U.S. Senate Select Committee on Ethics, 108th Cong., Senate Ethics Manual, 126 (2003), https://www.ethics.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/f2eb14e3-1123-48eb-9334-8c4717102a6e/2003-senate-ethics-manual.pdf.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*; 5 U.S.C. § 13106.

¹⁵ 18 U.S.C. § 1001(a).

¹⁶ *United States v. Tarver*, *supra* note 3, at 1111 (internal citations omitted).

reports with the Secretary of the Senate. Each candidate has declared their candidacy with an FEC Form 2 Statement of Candidacy, meaning all funds they had raised or spent testing the waters would factor into the \$5,000 candidate threshold. Each candidate had raised or spent \$5,000 at the time they declared their candidacy or at some point thereafter. After raising or spending \$5,000 and declaring their candidacy, each candidate would have been required to file a personal financial disclosure report with the Secretary of the or request an extension.

All the individuals listed below have qualified as Senate candidates under EIGA, but do not have a publicly available personal financial disclosure report or extension request on record with the Senate Office of Public Records as of September 11, 2026.¹⁷

¹⁷ See United States Senate Financial Disclosures, <https://efdsearch.senate.gov/search/> (last visited Sep. 11, 2026).

Qualifying Senate Candidates Without Personal Financial Disclosures on File

Candidate ¹⁸	Party	Original FEC Form 2 Date ¹⁹	Extension Request?	Uncorroborated Personal Loan to Campaign Committee? ²⁰
Kyle Austin (Montana)	Libertarian Nominee	1/6/2026	No	Yes
Mark Baisley (Colorado)	Republican Nominee	1/5/2026	No	Yes
Michael Dublin (North Carolina)	Green Candidate	6/3/2026	No	Yes
Whitfield Harrington Jr. (Illinois)	Independent Candidate	12/20/2025	No	Yes
Larry Marker (New Mexico)	Republican Nominee	4/29/2026	No	No
Ron Meinhardt (Oklahoma)	Independent Candidate	2/13/2026	No	No
Justin Murphy (New Jersey)	Republican Candidate	1/2/2026	No	Yes
Christopher "Rio" Phillips (West Virginia)	Independent Write-In Candidate	7/18/2025	No	No
N'Kiyla Thomas (Oklahoma)	Democratic Nominee	3/17/2025	No	No
Jeff Wadlin (Arkansas)	Libertarian Nominee	2/24/2026	No	No
Everett Wess (Alabama)	Democratic Nominee	1/22/2026	No	Yes

¹⁸ Appendix A contains a link to each candidate's FEC Form 2 and their principal campaign committee's receipts and disbursements. The Statement of Candidacy shows that each candidate is seeking federal office and ended the "testing the waters" phase of their candidacy. The FEC receipts and disbursements show that they all raised or spent \$5,000 in support of their candidacy, passing the financial disclosure filing threshold.

¹⁹ The listed date is the filing date of first Statement of Candidacy filed during the current election cycle, even if the candidate has since filed an Amended FEC Form 2.

²⁰ A link to any personal loans reported by the candidates to their principal campaign committees can be found in Appendix A.

III. Conclusion

The Ethics Committee should investigate to determine why these 11 Senate candidates have failed to timely file their candidate financial disclosure reports. Failing to enforce violations of the Senate's transparency requirements may incentivize others to ignore the law. The Ethics Committee should also provide updated guidance making the filing requirements and the penalties for not filing timely and accurate disclosure reports clear.

Sincerely,

_____/s/____

Kedric L. Payne
General Counsel, Vice President, and Senior Director,
Ethics

_____/s/____

Sophia Gonsalves-Brown
Senior Researcher, Campaign Finance and Ethics

Appendix

Senate Candidates' Statements of Candidacy and Campaign Committee Fundraising Data

Kyle Austin, Montana

- Kyle Austin Statement of Candidacy (FEC Form 2) (Jan. 6, 2026), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/879/202601069793906879/202601069793906879.pdf>.
- Receipts for Austin for Congress, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2026&committee_id=C00870352&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).
- Austin for Congress, Financial Summary, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?committee_id=C00870352&two_year_transaction_period=2026&two_year_transaction_period=2024&two_year_transaction_period=2022&line_number=F3-13A&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026) (showing \$35,000 in loans made by candidate).

Mark Baisley, Colorado

- Mark Baisley Statement of Candidacy (FEC Form 2) (Jan. 5, 2026), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/460/202601059793904460/202601059793904460.pdf>.
- Receipts for "Baisley for Senate" or "Baisley for CO Senate Republican Nominee Fund 2026," 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2026&committee_id=C00932848&committee_id=C00892034&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).
- Receipts for "Baisley for Senate" or "Baisley for CO Senate Republican Nominee Fund 2026," Loans received from the candidate, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?data_type=processed&committee_id=C00892034&committee_id=C00932848&two_year_transaction_period=2026&line_number=F3-13A (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).

Michael Dublin, North Carolina

- Michael Dublin Statement of Candidacy (FEC Form 2) (June 3, 2026), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/247/202606039870368247/202606039870368247.pdf>.
- Receipts for MichaelDublin4Congress, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2026&committee_id=C00857912&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).
- Receipts for MichaelDublin4Congress, Loans received from the candidate, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?committee_id=C00857912&two_year_transaction_period=2026&two_year_transaction_period=2024&two_year_transaction_period=2022&line_number=F3-13A&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).

Whitfield Harrington Jr., Illinois

- Whitfield Harrington Jr. Statement of Candidacy (FEC Form 2) (Dec. 20, 2025), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/817/202512209793691817/202512209793691817.pdf>.
- Receipts for Friends of Whitfield Harrington, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2026&committee_id=C00931428&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).
- Friends of Whitfield Harrington, Financial Summary, 2025-26, FEC, <https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00931428/> (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).

Larry Marker, New Mexico

- Larry Marker Statement of Candidacy (FEC Form 2) (Apr. 29, 2026), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/068/202604299866723068/202604299866723068.pdf>.
- Receipts for Friends of Larry Marker, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2026&committee_id=C00943738&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).

Ron Meinhardt, Oklahoma

- Ron Meinhardt Statement of Candidacy (FEC Form 2) (Feb. 13, 2026), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/062/202602139834320062/202602139834320062.pdf>.
- Receipts for Meinhardt for US Senate, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2026&committee_id=C00939058&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).

Justin Murphy, New Jersey

- Justin Murphy Statement of Candidacy (FEC Form 2) (Jan. 2, 2026), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/813/202601029793901813/202601029793901813.pdf>.
- Receipts for The Committee to Elect Justin Murphy 2024, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2026&committee_id=C00865808&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).
- Receipts for The Committee to Elect Justin Murphy 2024, Loans received from the candidate, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?data_type=processed&committee_id=C00865808&two_year_transaction_period=2026&line_number=F3-13A (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).

Christopher "Rio" Phillips, West Virginia

- Rio Phillips Statement of Candidacy (FEC Form 2) (July 18, 2025), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/927/202507189763596927/202507189763596927.pdf>.
- Receipts for Rio Phillips for West Virginia, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2026&committee_id=C00906396&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).

N'Kiyla "Jasmine Ann" Thomas, Oklahoma

- N'Kiyla Jasmine Ann Thomas Statement of Candidacy (FEC Form 2) (March 17, 2025), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/975/202503179754219975/202503179754219975.pdf>.
- Receipts for N'Kiyla for OK, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2026&committee_id=C00899559&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).

Jeff Wadlin, Arkansas

- Jeffrey Wadlin Statement of Candidacy (FEC Form 2) (Feb. 24, 2026), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/969/202602249837841969/202602249837841969.pdf>.
- Receipts for Wadlin for Senate 2026, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2026&committee_id=C00940619&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).

Everett Wess, Alabama

- Everett Wess Statement of Candidacy (FEC Form 2) (Jan. 22, 2026), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/192/202601229794116192/202601229794116192.pdf>.
- Receipts for Everett W. Wess for US Senate, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2026&committee_id=C00935783&data_type=processed (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).
- Receipts for Everett W. Wess for US Senate, Loans received from the candidate, 2025-26, FEC, https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?data_type=processed&committee_id=C00935783&two_year_transaction_period=2026&line_number=F3-13A (last visited Sep. 8, 2026).