

**As Introduced**

**135th General Assembly  
Special Session  
2023-2024**

**H. B. No. 1**

**Representative Seitz**

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**A BILL**

To amend sections 3517.12, 3517.13, and 3517.155 of  
the Revised Code to modify the Campaign Finance  
Law regarding foreign nationals and statewide  
initiatives and referenda and to declare an  
emergency.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1.** That sections 3517.12, 3517.13, and 3517.155 of  
the Revised Code be amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 3517.12.** (A) Prior to receiving a contribution or  
making an expenditure, the circulator or committee in charge of  
an initiative or referendum petition, or supplementary petition  
for additional signatures, for the submission of a  
constitutional amendment, proposed law, section, or item of any  
law shall appoint a treasurer and shall file with the secretary  
of state, on a form prescribed by the secretary of state under  
division (D) of section 3517.10 of the Revised Code, a  
designation of that appointment, including the full name and  
address of the treasurer and of the circulator or committee.

(B) The circulator or the committee in charge of an  
initiative or referendum petition, or supplementary petition for

additional signatures, for the submission of a constitutional 20  
amendment, proposed law, section, or item of any law shall, 21  
within thirty days after those petition papers are filed, file 22  
with the secretary of state, on a form prescribed by the 23  
secretary of state, an itemized statement, made under penalty of 24  
election falsification, showing in detail the following: 25

(1) All money or things of value paid, given, promised, or 26  
received for circulating the petitions; 27

(2) All appointments, promotions, or increases in salary, 28  
in positions which were given, promised, or received, or to 29  
obtain which assistance was given, promised, or received as a 30  
consideration for work done in circulating petitions; 31

(3) Full names and addresses, including street, city, and 32  
state, of all persons to whom such payments or promises were 33  
made and of all persons from whom such payments or promises were 34  
received; 35

(4) Full names and addresses, including street, city, and 36  
state, of all persons who contributed anything of value to be 37  
used in circulating the petitions, and the amounts of those 38  
contributions; 39

(5) Time spent and salaries earned while soliciting 40  
signatures to petitions by persons who were regular salaried 41  
employees of some person or whom that employer authorized to 42  
solicit as part of their regular duties. 43

If no money or things of value were paid or received or if 44  
no promises were made or received as a consideration for work 45  
done in circulating a petition, the statement shall contain 46  
words to that effect. 47

(C) The treasurer designated under division (A) of this 48

section shall file statements of contributions and expenditures 49  
in accordance with section 3517.10 of the Revised Code regarding 50  
all contributions made or received and all expenditures made by 51  
that treasurer or the circulator or committee in connection with 52  
the initiative or referendum petition, or supplementary petition 53  
for additional signatures, for the submission of a 54  
constitutional amendment, proposed law, section, or item of any 55  
law. 56

**Sec. 3517.13.** (A) (1) No campaign committee of a statewide 57  
candidate shall fail to file a complete and accurate statement 58  
required under division (A) (1) of section 3517.10 of the Revised 59  
Code. 60

(2) No campaign committee of a statewide candidate shall 61  
fail to file a complete and accurate monthly statement, and no 62  
campaign committee of a statewide candidate or a candidate for 63  
the office of chief justice or justice of the supreme court 64  
shall fail to file a complete and accurate two-business-day 65  
statement, as required under section 3517.10 of the Revised 66  
Code. 67

As used in this division, "statewide candidate" has the 68  
same meaning as in division (F) (2) of section 3517.10 of the 69  
Revised Code. 70

(B) No campaign committee shall fail to file a complete 71  
and accurate statement required under division (A) (1) of section 72  
3517.10 of the Revised Code. 73

(C) No campaign committee shall fail to file a complete 74  
and accurate statement required under division (A) (2) of section 75  
3517.10 of the Revised Code. 76

(D) No campaign committee shall fail to file a complete 77

and accurate statement required under division (A) (3) or (4) of 78  
section 3517.10 of the Revised Code. 79

(E) No person other than a campaign committee shall 80  
knowingly fail to file a statement required under section 81  
3517.10 or 3517.107 of the Revised Code. 82

(F) No person shall make cash contributions to any person 83  
totaling more than one hundred dollars in each primary, special, 84  
or general election. 85

(G) (1) No person shall knowingly conceal or misrepresent 86  
contributions given or received, expenditures made, or any other 87  
information required to be reported by a provision in sections 88  
3517.08 to 3517.13 of the Revised Code. 89

(2) (a) No person shall make a contribution to a campaign 90  
committee, political action committee, political contributing 91  
entity, legislative campaign fund, political party, committee 92  
described in section 3517.12 of the Revised Code, or person 93  
making disbursements to pay the direct costs of producing or 94  
airing electioneering communications in the name of another 95  
person. 96

(b) A person does not make a contribution in the name of 97  
another when either of the following applies: 98

(i) An individual makes a contribution from a partnership 99  
or other unincorporated business account, if the contribution is 100  
reported by listing both the name of the partnership or other 101  
unincorporated business and the name of the partner or owner 102  
making the contribution as required under division (I) of 103  
section 3517.10 of the Revised Code. 104

(ii) A person makes a contribution in that person's 105  
spouse's name or in both of their names. 106

(H) No person within this state, publishing a newspaper or other periodical, shall charge a campaign committee for political advertising a rate in excess of the rate such person would charge if the campaign committee were a general rate advertiser whose advertising was directed to promoting its business within the same area as that encompassed by the particular office that the candidate of the campaign committee is seeking. The rate shall take into account the amount of space used, as well as the type of advertising copy submitted by or on behalf of the campaign committee. All discount privileges otherwise offered by a newspaper or periodical to general rate advertisers shall be available upon equal terms to all campaign committees.

No person within this state, operating a radio or television station or network of stations in this state, shall charge a campaign committee for political broadcasts a rate that exceeds:

(1) During the forty-five days preceding the date of a primary election and during the sixty days preceding the date of a general or special election in which the candidate of the campaign committee is seeking office, the lowest unit charge of the station for the same class and amount of time for the same period;

(2) At any other time, the charges made for comparable use of that station by its other users.

(I) Subject to divisions (K), (L), (M), and (N) of this section, no agency or department of this state or any political subdivision shall award any contract, other than one let by competitive bidding or a contract incidental to such contract or which is by force account, for the purchase of goods costing

more than five hundred dollars or services costing more than 137  
five hundred dollars to any individual, partnership, 138  
association, including, without limitation, a professional 139  
association organized under Chapter 1785. of the Revised Code, 140  
estate, or trust if the individual has made or the individual's 141  
spouse has made, or any partner, shareholder, administrator, 142  
executor, or trustee or the spouse of any of them has made, as 143  
an individual, within the two previous calendar years, one or 144  
more contributions totaling in excess of one thousand dollars to 145  
the holder of the public office having ultimate responsibility 146  
for the award of the contract or to the public officer's 147  
campaign committee. 148

(J) Subject to divisions (K), (L), (M), and (N) of this 149  
section, no agency or department of this state or any political 150  
subdivision shall award any contract, other than one let by 151  
competitive bidding or a contract incidental to such contract or 152  
which is by force account, for the purchase of goods costing 153  
more than five hundred dollars or services costing more than 154  
five hundred dollars to a corporation or business trust, except 155  
a professional association organized under Chapter 1785. of the 156  
Revised Code, if an owner of more than twenty per cent of the 157  
corporation or business trust or the spouse of that person has 158  
made, as an individual, within the two previous calendar years, 159  
taking into consideration only owners for all of that period, 160  
one or more contributions totaling in excess of one thousand 161  
dollars to the holder of a public office having ultimate 162  
responsibility for the award of the contract or to the public 163  
officer's campaign committee. 164

(K) For purposes of divisions (I) and (J) of this section, 165  
if a public officer who is responsible for the award of a 166  
contract is appointed by the governor, whether or not the 167

appointment is subject to the advice and consent of the senate, 168  
excluding members of boards, commissions, committees, 169  
authorities, councils, boards of trustees, task forces, and 170  
other such entities appointed by the governor, the office of the 171  
governor is considered to have ultimate responsibility for the 172  
award of the contract. 173

(L) For purposes of divisions (I) and (J) of this section, 174  
if a public officer who is responsible for the award of a 175  
contract is appointed by the elected chief executive officer of 176  
a municipal corporation, or appointed by the elected chief 177  
executive officer of a county operating under an alternative 178  
form of county government or county charter, excluding members 179  
of boards, commissions, committees, authorities, councils, 180  
boards of trustees, task forces, and other such entities 181  
appointed by the chief executive officer, the office of the 182  
chief executive officer is considered to have ultimate 183  
responsibility for the award of the contract. 184

(M) (1) Divisions (I) and (J) of this section do not apply 185  
to contracts awarded by the board of commissioners of the 186  
sinking fund, municipal legislative authorities, boards of 187  
education, boards of county commissioners, boards of township 188  
trustees, or other boards, commissions, committees, authorities, 189  
councils, boards of trustees, task forces, and other such 190  
entities created by law, by the supreme court or courts of 191  
appeals, by county courts consisting of more than one judge, 192  
courts of common pleas consisting of more than one judge, or 193  
municipal courts consisting of more than one judge, or by a 194  
division of any court if the division consists of more than one 195  
judge. This division shall apply to the specified entity only if 196  
the members of the entity act collectively in the award of a 197  
contract for goods or services. 198

(2) Divisions (I) and (J) of this section do not apply to 199  
actions of the controlling board. 200

(N)(1) Divisions (I) and (J) of this section apply to 201  
contributions made to the holder of a public office having 202  
ultimate responsibility for the award of a contract, or to the 203  
public officer's campaign committee, during the time the person 204  
holds the office and during any time such person was a candidate 205  
for the office. Those divisions do not apply to contributions 206  
made to, or to the campaign committee of, a candidate for or 207  
holder of the office other than the holder of the office at the 208  
time of the award of the contract. 209

(2) Divisions (I) and (J) of this section do not apply to 210  
contributions of a partner, shareholder, administrator, 211  
executor, trustee, or owner of more than twenty per cent of a 212  
corporation or business trust made before the person held any of 213  
those positions or after the person ceased to hold any of those 214  
positions in the partnership, association, estate, trust, 215  
corporation, or business trust whose eligibility to be awarded a 216  
contract is being determined, nor to contributions of the 217  
person's spouse made before the person held any of those 218  
positions, after the person ceased to hold any of those 219  
positions, before the two were married, after the granting of a 220  
decree of divorce, dissolution of marriage, or annulment, or 221  
after the granting of an order in an action brought solely for 222  
legal separation. Those divisions do not apply to contributions 223  
of the spouse of an individual whose eligibility to be awarded a 224  
contract is being determined made before the two were married, 225  
after the granting of a decree of divorce, dissolution of 226  
marriage, or annulment, or after the granting of an order in an 227  
action brought solely for legal separation. 228



(0) No beneficiary of a campaign fund or other person	229
shall convert for personal use, and no person shall knowingly	230
give to a beneficiary of a campaign fund or any other person,	231
for the beneficiary's or any other person's personal use,	232
anything of value from the beneficiary's campaign fund,	233
including, without limitation, payments to a beneficiary for	234
services the beneficiary personally performs, except as	235
reimbursement for any of the following:	236
(1) Legitimate and verifiable prior campaign expenses	237
incurred by the beneficiary;	238
(2) Legitimate and verifiable ordinary and necessary prior	239
expenses incurred by the beneficiary in connection with duties	240
as the holder of a public office, including, without limitation,	241
expenses incurred through participation in nonpartisan or	242
bipartisan events if the participation of the holder of a public	243
office would normally be expected;	244
(3) Legitimate and verifiable ordinary and necessary prior	245
expenses incurred by the beneficiary while doing any of the	246
following:	247
(a) Engaging in activities in support of or opposition to	248
a candidate other than the beneficiary, political party, or	249
ballot issue;	250
(b) Raising funds for a political party, political action	251
committee, political contributing entity, legislative campaign	252
fund, campaign committee, or other candidate;	253
(c) Participating in the activities of a political party,	254
political action committee, political contributing entity,	255
legislative campaign fund, or campaign committee;	256
(d) Attending a political party convention or other	257

political meeting. 258

For purposes of this division, an expense is incurred 259  
whenever a beneficiary has either made payment or is obligated 260  
to make payment, as by the use of a credit card or other credit 261  
procedure or by the use of goods or services received on 262  
account. 263

(P) No beneficiary of a campaign fund shall knowingly 264  
accept, and no person shall knowingly give to the beneficiary of 265  
a campaign fund, reimbursement for an expense under division (O) 266  
of this section to the extent that the expense previously was 267  
reimbursed or paid from another source of funds. If an expense 268  
is reimbursed under division (O) of this section and is later 269  
paid or reimbursed, wholly or in part, from another source of 270  
funds, the beneficiary shall repay the reimbursement received 271  
under division (O) of this section to the extent of the payment 272  
made or reimbursement received from the other source. 273

(Q) No candidate or public official or employee shall 274  
accept for personal or business use anything of value from a 275  
political party, political action committee, political 276  
contributing entity, legislative campaign fund, or campaign 277  
committee other than the candidate's or public official's or 278  
employee's own campaign committee, and no person shall knowingly 279  
give to a candidate or public official or employee anything of 280  
value from a political party, political action committee, 281  
political contributing entity, legislative campaign fund, or 282  
such a campaign committee, except for the following: 283

(1) Reimbursement for legitimate and verifiable ordinary 284  
and necessary prior expenses not otherwise prohibited by law 285  
incurred by the candidate or public official or employee while 286  
engaged in any legitimate activity of the political party, 287

political action committee, political contributing entity,	288
legislative campaign fund, or such campaign committee. Without	289
limitation, reimbursable expenses under this division include	290
those incurred while doing any of the following:	291
(a) Engaging in activities in support of or opposition to	292
another candidate, political party, or ballot issue;	293
(b) Raising funds for a political party, legislative	294
campaign fund, campaign committee, or another candidate;	295
(c) Attending a political party convention or other	296
political meeting.	297
(2) Compensation not otherwise prohibited by law for	298
actual and valuable personal services rendered under a written	299
contract to the political party, political action committee,	300
political contributing entity, legislative campaign fund, or	301
such campaign committee for any legitimate activity of the	302
political party, political action committee, political	303
contributing entity, legislative campaign fund, or such campaign	304
committee.	305
Reimbursable expenses under this division do not include,	306
and it is a violation of this division for a candidate or public	307
official or employee to accept, or for any person to knowingly	308
give to a candidate or public official or employee from a	309
political party, political action committee, political	310
contributing entity, legislative campaign fund, or campaign	311
committee other than the candidate's or public official's or	312
employee's own campaign committee, anything of value for	313
activities primarily related to the candidate's or public	314
official's or employee's own campaign for election, except for	315
contributions to the candidate's or public official's or	316

employee's campaign committee. 317

For purposes of this division, an expense is incurred 318  
whenever a candidate or public official or employee has either 319  
made payment or is obligated to make payment, as by the use of a 320  
credit card or other credit procedure, or by the use of goods or 321  
services on account. 322

(R) (1) Division (O) or (P) of this section does not 323  
prohibit a campaign committee from making direct advance or post 324  
payment from contributions to vendors for goods and services for 325  
which reimbursement is permitted under division (O) of this 326  
section, except that no campaign committee shall pay its 327  
candidate or other beneficiary for services personally performed 328  
by the candidate or other beneficiary. 329

(2) If any expense that may be reimbursed under division 330  
(O), (P), or (Q) of this section is part of other expenses that 331  
may not be paid or reimbursed, the separation of the two types 332  
of expenses for the purpose of allocating for payment or 333  
reimbursement those expenses that may be paid or reimbursed may 334  
be by any reasonable accounting method, considering all of the 335  
surrounding circumstances. 336

(3) For purposes of divisions (O), (P), and (Q) of this 337  
section, mileage allowance at a rate not greater than that 338  
allowed by the internal revenue service at the time the travel 339  
occurs may be paid instead of reimbursement for actual travel 340  
expenses allowable. 341

(S) (1) As used in division (S) of this section: 342

(a) "State elective office" has the same meaning as in 343  
section 3517.092 of the Revised Code. 344

(b) "Federal office" means a federal office as defined in 345

the Federal Election Campaign Act. 346

(c) "Federal campaign committee" means a principal 347  
campaign committee or authorized committee as defined in the 348  
Federal Election Campaign Act. 349

(2) No person who is a candidate for state elective office 350  
and who previously sought nomination or election to a federal 351  
office shall transfer any funds or assets from that person's 352  
federal campaign committee for nomination or election to the 353  
federal office to that person's campaign committee as a 354  
candidate for state elective office. 355

(3) No campaign committee of a person who is a candidate 356  
for state elective office and who previously sought nomination 357  
or election to a federal office shall accept any funds or assets 358  
from that person's federal campaign committee for that person's 359  
nomination or election to the federal office. 360

(T) (1) Except as otherwise provided in division (B) (6) (c) 361  
of section 3517.102 of the Revised Code, a state or county 362  
political party shall not disburse moneys from any account other 363  
than a state candidate fund to make contributions to any of the 364  
following: 365

(a) A state candidate fund; 366

(b) A legislative campaign fund; 367

(c) A campaign committee of a candidate for the office of 368  
governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor of 369  
state, treasurer of state, attorney general, member of the state 370  
board of education, or member of the general assembly. 371

(2) No state candidate fund, legislative campaign fund, or 372  
campaign committee of a candidate for any office described in 373

division (T) (1) (c) of this section shall knowingly accept a 374  
contribution in violation of division (T) (1) of this section. 375

(U) No person shall fail to file a statement required 376  
under section 3517.12 of the Revised Code. 377

(V) No campaign committee shall fail to file a statement 378  
required under division (K) (3) of section 3517.10 of the Revised 379  
Code. 380

(W) (1) No foreign national shall, directly or indirectly 381  
through any other person or entity, ~~make knowingly do any of the~~ 382  
following: 383

(a) Make a contribution, to a candidate, campaign 384  
committee, political action committee, political contributing 385  
entity, legislative campaign fund, state candidate fund, 386  
political party, or separate segregated fund or to any committee 387  
described in section 3517.12 of the Revised Code; 388

(b) Make an expenditure, or independent expenditure or 389  
promise, either expressly or implicitly, to make a contribution, 390  
expenditure, or independent expenditure in support of or 391  
opposition to a candidate for any elective office in this state, 392  
including an office of a political party, or in support of or 393  
opposition to any statewide ballot issue or question; 394

(c) Promise, either expressly or implicitly, to make a 395  
contribution, expenditure, or independent expenditure described 396  
in division (W) (1) (a) or (b) of this section. 397

(2) No candidate, campaign committee, political action 398  
committee, political contributing entity, legislative campaign 399  
fund, state candidate fund, political party, or separate 400  
segregated fund and no committee described in section 3517.12 of 401  
the Revised Code shall knowingly solicit or accept a 402

contribution, expenditure, or independent expenditure from a 403  
foreign national. The secretary of state ~~may~~ shall direct any 404  
candidate, committee, entity, fund, or party that knowingly 405  
accepts a contribution, expenditure, or independent expenditure 406  
in violation of this division to return the contribution, 407  
expenditure, or independent expenditure or, if it is not 408  
possible to return the contribution, expenditure, or independent 409  
expenditure, then to return instead the value of it, to the 410  
contributor. 411

(3) As used in division (W) of this section, "foreign 412  
national" has the same meaning as in section 441e(b) of the 413  
Federal Election Campaign Act. 414

(X) (1) No state or county political party shall transfer 415  
any moneys from its restricted fund to any account of the 416  
political party into which contributions may be made or from 417  
which contributions or expenditures may be made. 418

(2) (a) No state or county political party shall deposit a 419  
contribution or contributions that it receives into its 420  
restricted fund. 421

(b) No state or county political party shall make a 422  
contribution or an expenditure from its restricted fund. 423

(3) (a) No corporation or labor organization shall make a 424  
gift or gifts from the corporation's or labor organization's 425  
money or property aggregating more than ten thousand dollars to 426  
any one state or county political party for the party's 427  
restricted fund in a calendar year. 428

(b) No state or county political party shall accept a gift 429  
or gifts for the party's restricted fund aggregating more than 430  
ten thousand dollars from any one corporation or labor 431

organization in a calendar year. 432

(4) No state or county political party shall transfer any 433  
moneys in the party's restricted fund to any other state or 434  
county political party. 435

(5) No state or county political party shall knowingly 436  
fail to file a statement required under section 3517.1012 of the 437  
Revised Code. 438

(Y) The administrator of workers' compensation and the 439  
employees of the bureau of workers' compensation shall not 440  
conduct any business with or award any contract, other than one 441  
awarded by competitive bidding, for the purchase of goods 442  
costing more than five hundred dollars or services costing more 443  
than five hundred dollars to any individual, partnership, 444  
association, including, without limitation, a professional 445  
association organized under Chapter 1785. of the Revised Code, 446  
estate, or trust, if the individual has made, or the 447  
individual's spouse has made, or any partner, shareholder, 448  
administrator, executor, or trustee, or the spouses of any of 449  
those individuals has made, as an individual, within the two 450  
previous calendar years, one or more contributions totaling in 451  
excess of one thousand dollars to the campaign committee of the 452  
governor or lieutenant governor or to the campaign committee of 453  
any candidate for the office of governor or lieutenant governor. 454

(Z) The administrator of workers' compensation and the 455  
employees of the bureau of workers' compensation shall not 456  
conduct business with or award any contract, other than one 457  
awarded by competitive bidding, for the purchase of goods 458  
costing more than five hundred dollars or services costing more 459  
than five hundred dollars to a corporation or business trust, 460  
except a professional association organized under Chapter 1785. 461



of the Revised Code, if an owner of more than twenty per cent of 462  
the corporation or business trust, or the spouse of the owner, 463  
has made, as an individual, within the two previous calendar 464  
years, taking into consideration only owners for all of such 465  
period, one or more contributions totaling in excess of one 466  
thousand dollars to the campaign committee of the governor or 467  
lieutenant governor or to the campaign committee of any 468  
candidate for the office of governor or lieutenant governor. 469

**Sec. 3517.155.** (A) (1) Except as otherwise provided in 470  
division (B) of this section, the Ohio elections commission 471  
shall hold its first hearing on a complaint filed with it, other 472  
than a complaint that receives an expedited hearing under 473  
section 3517.156 of the Revised Code, not later than ninety 474  
business days after the complaint is filed unless the commission 475  
has good cause to hold the hearing after that time, in which 476  
case it shall hold the hearing not later than one hundred eighty 477  
business days after the complaint is filed. At the hearing, the 478  
commission shall determine whether or not the failure to act or 479  
the violation alleged in the complaint has occurred and shall do 480  
only one of the following, except as otherwise provided in 481  
~~division (B) of this section~~ or in division (B) of section 482  
3517.151 of the Revised Code: 483

(a) Enter a finding that good cause has been shown not to 484  
impose a fine or not to refer the matter to the appropriate 485  
prosecutor; 486

(b) Impose a fine under section 3517.993 of the Revised 487  
Code; 488

(c) Refer the matter to the appropriate prosecutor, as 489  
determined under division (A) (2) of this section. 490

(2) ~~As used in division (A) of this section, "appropriate prosecutor" means a prosecutor as defined in section 2935.01 of the Revised Code and either of the following:~~ 491  
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(a) In the case of a failure to comply with or a violation 494  
of law involving ~~a campaign committee or the committee's~~ 495  
~~candidate, a political party, a legislative campaign fund, a~~ 496  
~~political action committee, or a political contributing entity,~~ 497  
~~that is required to file a statement of contributions and~~ 498  
~~expenditures with the secretary of state under division (A) of~~ 499  
~~section 3517.11 of the Revised Code~~ any of the following 500  
persons, the prosecutor of Franklin county, commission shall 501  
refer the matter to the attorney general, except that if the 502  
attorney general is a victim or witness or otherwise involved in 503  
the matter, the commission shall refer the matter to a county 504  
prosecutor whom the commission deems appropriate to prosecute 505  
the matter: 506

(i) A campaign committee, or the committee's candidate, 507  
for a statewide office or the state board of education; 508

(ii) A committee described in section 3517.12 of the 509  
Revised Code; 510

(iii) Any person, other than an individual, whose 511  
principal place of business is not in Ohio; 512

(iv) Any individual who is not a resident of Ohio. 513

(b) In the case of a failure to comply with or a violation 514  
of law involving ~~any other campaign committee or committee's~~ 515  
~~candidate, or any other political party, political action~~ 516  
~~committee, or political contributing entity either of the~~ 517  
~~following as determined by the commission:~~ 518

~~(i) The prosecutor of Franklin county;~~ 519

~~(ii) The other person, the commission shall refer the~~ 520  
~~matter to the prosecutor of the county in which the candidacy or~~ 521  
~~ballot question or issue is submitted to the electors or, if it~~ 522  
~~is submitted in more than one county, the most populous of those~~ 523  
~~counties person, other than an individual, has its principal~~ 524  
~~place of business or the county in which the individual resides,~~ 525  
~~as applicable, except that if that prosecutor is a victim or~~ 526  
~~witness or otherwise involved in the matter, the commission~~ 527  
~~shall refer the matter to a county prosecutor whom the~~ 528  
~~commission deems appropriate to prosecute the matter. Upon the~~ 529  
~~request of the prosecutor to whom the commission refers the~~ 530  
~~matter, the attorney general may assume responsibility for~~ 531  
~~prosecuting the matter, unless the attorney general is a victim~~ 532  
~~or witness or is otherwise involved in the matter.~~ 533

(3) When the commission refers a matter to the attorney 534  
general under this section, or when the attorney general assumes 535  
responsibility for prosecuting a matter under this section, the 536  
attorney general may prosecute the matter with all the rights, 537  
privileges, and powers conferred by law on prosecuting 538  
attorneys, including the power to appear before grand juries and 539  
to interrogate witnesses before such grand juries. These powers 540  
of the attorney general are in addition to any other applicable 541  
powers of the attorney general. 542

(B) If the commission decides that the evidence is 543  
insufficient for it to determine whether or not the failure to 544  
act or the violation alleged in the complaint has occurred, the 545  
commission, by the affirmative vote of five members, may request 546  
that an investigatory attorney investigate the complaint. Upon 547  
that request, an investigatory attorney shall make an 548  
investigation in order to produce sufficient evidence for the 549  
commission to decide the matter. If the commission requests an 550

investigation under this division, for good cause shown by the 551  
investigatory attorney, the commission may extend by sixty days 552  
the deadline for holding its first hearing on the complaint as 553  
required in division (A) of this section. 554

(C) The commission shall take one of the actions required 555  
under division (A) of this section not later than thirty days 556  
after the close of all the evidence presented. 557

(D) (1) The commission shall make any finding of a failure 558  
to comply with or a violation of law in regard to a complaint 559  
that alleges a violation of division (A) or (B) of section 560  
3517.21, or division (A) or (B) of section 3517.22 of the 561  
Revised Code by clear and convincing evidence. The commission 562  
shall make any finding of a failure to comply with or a 563  
violation of law in regard to any other complaint by a 564  
preponderance of the evidence. 565

(2) If the commission finds a violation of division (B) of 566  
section 3517.21 or division (B) of section 3517.22 of the 567  
Revised Code, it shall refer the matter to the appropriate 568  
prosecutor under division (A) (1) (c) of this section and shall 569  
not impose a fine under division (A) (1) (b) of this section or 570  
section 3517.993 of the Revised Code. 571

(3) If the commission finds a violation of division (W) of 572  
section 3517.13 of the Revised Code, it shall do one of the 573  
following: 574

(a) Impose a fine under section 3517.993 of the Revised 575  
Code in an amount equal to three times the amount involved in 576  
the violation or ten thousand dollars, whichever amount is 577  
greater, with none of the fine suspended and, in the case of a 578  
violation of division (W) (2) of section 3517.13 of the Revised 579

Code, order the violator to return an amount equal to any amount 580  
accepted in violation of that division to the foreign national 581  
from whom it was accepted; 582

(b) Refer the matter to the appropriate prosecutor. 583

(E) In an action before the commission or a panel of the 584  
commission, if the allegations of the complainant are not 585  
proved, and the commission takes the action described in 586  
division (A) (1) (a) of this section or a panel of the commission 587  
takes the action described in division (C) (1) of section 588  
3517.156 of the Revised Code, the commission or a panel of the 589  
commission may find that the complaint is frivolous, and, if the 590  
commission or panel so finds, the commission shall order the 591  
complainant to pay reasonable attorney's fees and to pay the 592  
costs of the commission or panel as determined by a majority of 593  
the members of the commission. The costs paid to the commission 594  
or panel under this division shall be deposited into the Ohio 595  
elections commission fund. 596

**Section 2.** That existing sections 3517.12, 3517.13, and 597  
3517.155 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed. 598

**Section 3.** This act is hereby declared to be an emergency 599  
measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public 600  
peace, health, and safety. The reason for such necessity is to 601  
allow its provisions to be effective for purposes of the 2024 602  
general election. Therefore, this act shall go into immediate 603  
effect. 604