

# TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION

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March 18, 2020

To local filing authorities and local filers:

This notice is to provide general guidance to local filing authorities and local filers about campaign finance filings while communities deal with office closures and other disruptions caused by COVID-19.

On March 18, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott issued a proclamation suspending provisions of the Texas Election Code to allow political subdivisions to postpone their 2020 local elections. This means local governments now have the ability to postpone their May 2, 2020, elections to November 3, 2020.

Governor Abbott is encouraging local election officials to take advantage of these waivers and postpone their elections until November. If an election is postponed to November, it will also postpone Texas Ethics Commission filing deadlines associated with that election.

All candidates and political committees (PACs) should verify the election date with the authority holding the election.

If a political subdivision opts to hold local elections on May 2, 2020, the deadlines for campaign finance reports filed by candidates, officeholders, and PACs for races and/or measures on the May 2, 2020, ballots remain the same. The Commission does not have the statutory authority to extend these types of filing deadlines. The 30-day pre-election report for the May 2, 2020, uniform election is due by April 2, 2020. The 8-day pre-election report is due by April 24, 2020. A complete filing schedule for the May 2, 2020, uniform election and the November 3, 2020, uniform election can be found at <https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/data/filinginfo/schedules/s20uniform.pdf>. The filing schedule for candidates and officeholders at the county-level can be found at <https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/data/filinginfo/schedules/s20county.pdf>.

If your office is closed, it should still be possible for candidates and officeholders to file reports. Even when personal delivery is impossible, a campaign finance report may still be filed by mail, fax, or email. If a filer emails a report, you should retain the email transmitting the report to verify the filing date.

We understand that filers and local filing authorities may encounter difficulties filing and processing campaign finance reports due to COVID-19. If a filer has difficulty meeting the filing deadline, they should document this, and be able to provide that documentation if necessary. The Commission will consider all factors in the event of a sworn complaint.

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