

Bill Short title: Shine the light on dark money

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Disqualification of judge receiving political contribution/influence. (1) As used in this section, "judge" means a justice of the supreme court or district court judge

(2) A judge may not sit or act in a proceeding if:

(a) the judge has received a contribution in excess of the amount established in 13-37-216 from a party to the proceeding, or from a party's attorney; the attorney's law firm and

(b) the contribution from the party or the party's attorney or the attorney's law firm was received in support of the judge's last election or in anticipation of an upcoming election

(c) the party, parties attorney, or attorney's law firm made a contribution to a Political Action Committee, and/or a third party independent organization that made independent expenditures on behalf of the judges election bid

(d) the party, parties attorney, or the law firm of the parties attorney, donated to independent organizations that gave financial support, endorsements, or in kind contributions to the judges candidacy

(e) any party, attorney or attorney's law firm, who knows or should have known that they were involved in the above activities must disclose those activities to the judge

(f) attempts to circumvent the intentions of this act are a felony

(3) A judge who is required to be disqualified pursuant to this section shall disclose in the matter before the court any contribution subject to this section as the basis of the judge's disqualification. The disclosure must be made in a legal notice and on the record.

(4) A complaint may be filed with the Commission of Political Practices or the Judicial Standards Commission as an ethics violation or Justice Court are a misdemeanor. A ruling shall be prioritized to happen before an election day, if prudent. Rulings are appealable.

(a) (Redundant) Pursuant to this act the Commission of Political Practices, nor the Judicial Standards Commission, nor any court shall establish or rely on

rules contrary to the public's right to know enshrined in Art II Sec 9 and Art II Sec 10 of the Montana Constitution. All document requests pursuant to this act shall be granted expeditiously with the exception of issues involving personal privacy.

Effective date. [This act] is effective upon approval by the electorate.