

'COMMITTEE FOR BETTER ROADS' FAILS TO FILE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS WITH STATE

By Ron Munden – May 9, 2012

On Tuesday a representative in the Texas Ethics Commission told ETT that the “Committee for Better Roads” (CBR) had not registered with the state as required by law. He did say that the CBR could have filed with the Harrison County elections office.

ETT contacted Pam Block at the Harrison County Office and Lisa Agnor at the city. Both said that the CBR had not filed any paperwork with them.

The representative at the TEC said that not filing is a violation of state law and referred me to their “Campaign Finance Guide for Political Committees” for details.

The guide states:

FILING AN APPOINTMENT OF CAMPAIGN TREASURER

A group becomes a political committee by its actions, not by filing an appointment of campaign treasurer. A political committee must have a campaign treasurer appointment on file, however, before it may engage in certain activity.

\$500 THRESHOLDS FOR FILING A CAMPAIGN TREASURER APPOINTMENT

***Contributions.** Neither a general-purpose committee nor a specific-purpose committee may accept political contributions that total more than \$500 without first filing a campaign treasurer appointment.*

ETT could find nothing that would indicate the CBR took this action.

The guide establishes specific filing requirements. The guide states:

FILING SCHEDULE FOR SPECIFIC-PURPOSE POLITICAL COMMITTEES

Unlike general-purpose political committees, specific-purpose political committees do not have the option of selecting monthly filing.

30-DAY PRE-ELECTION REPORT

The campaign treasurer of a specific-purpose political committee must file a 30-day pre-election report if the committee supports or opposes an opposed candidate or measure during the period beginning the first day after the period covered by the political committee's last report .

8-DAY PRE-ELECTION REPORT

The campaign treasurer of a specific-purpose political committee must file an 8-day pre-election report.

The guide establishes penalties for violations of filing requirements. The guide states:

PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF FILING REQUIREMENTS

A person who files a report late or fails to file a report is subject to a late-filing penalty. The late-filing penalty in connection with most reports is \$500. For a report due eight days before an election

or for the first semiannual report due after a primary or general election, the late filing penalty is \$500 for the first day the report is late and \$100 a day for each day thereafter that the report is late.

Also, any citizen may file a criminal complaint with the district attorney, a civil complaint with the Texas Ethics Commission, or a civil action against political committee or against a campaign treasurer of a political committee for violations of title 15.

The CBR sign's political advertising statement does not contain the name of a person. It does list a post office box number. ETT "googled" the "P.O. Box 1806 Marshall Texas". Google returned the links to several webpages. They indicate that this post office is being used by Casey Pottery.

The Texas Ethics Commission representative said the "Committee for Better Roads" must register and file reports or it is in violation of the law.

ETT will report additional developments as they become available.