



San Francisco Ethics Commission

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Date: September 4, 2026

To: Members of the Ethics Commission

From: Michael Canning, Policy & Legislative Affairs Manager
Trishia Lim, Policy Research Specialist

Re: **AGENDA ITEM 11 – Discussion and Possible Action on Legislation Updating the Website Address on Campaign Disclaimer Requirements**

Summary and Action Requested

This memo provides an overview of the Commission's legislation amending [Sections 1.161](#) and [1.162](#) of the Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code (C&GCC) to update the website address referenced in campaign and electioneering communication disclaimer requirements to reflect the Ethics Commission's upcoming change to a new web domain.

Staff recommend the Commission review, discuss, and approve the legislation as drafted in [Attachment 1](#).

Background

In June of 2025, the Policy Division presented a series of recommendations stemming from the Commission's ongoing [streamlining project](#). The project evaluated various programs and policies administered by the Commission to determine if they are effective, efficient, add value to the City, and furthering the Commission's mission of promoting the highest standards of integrity in government.

The streamlining project made recommendations that would scale back certain programs and policies, streamline and simplify various processes, and make important updates to the City's rules. This led to the creation of three ordinances, two of which would amend the Campaign & Governmental Conduct Code. These two ordinances require joint approval by supermajorities of both the Board of Supervisors and the Ethics Commission. In September 2025, [the Commission unanimously \(5-0\) approved](#) the two ordinances ([File No. 250867](#) and [File No. 250868](#)).

Following the Commission's approval, the ordinances underwent an extensive year-long engagement process with the Board of Supervisors and other stakeholders to advance the legislation. The legislation was not scheduled for a hearing at the Rules Committee from October 2025 through May 2026. The legislation was then moved to the Government Audit and Oversight Committee (GAO) and scheduled for a hearing earlier this year. In July 2026, [Ethics staff presented at GAO](#) where all three ordinances were considered and subsequently continued for potential future action. None of the ordinances have been

rescheduled for further consideration, however it is likely the ordinance regarding trustee election reporting requirements will be heard again at GAO in September ([File No. 250928](#)).

As the timing and overall future of the streamlining ordinances is uncertain, the legislation before the Commission today takes one of the recommendations from the existing ordinances and spins it out into its own standalone ordinance. The legislation contains the amendments regarding disclaimer requirements from the campaign finance ordinance that the Commission approved in September 2025 as part of the streamlining project ([File No. 250868](#)).

This recommendation is being advanced as separate legislation to allow the Commission to prepare for an upcoming website domain transition that is required under State law and is time sensitive. While the streamlining ordinances may have a path forward, it is possible they will be further delayed or amended as Staff continue to engage with the Board of Supervisors and other stakeholders. While stakeholders have raised concerns regarding other aspects of the streamlining legislation, no concerns have been raised regarding the disclaimer changes. Separating out disclaimer updates is intended to allow these non-controversial, but time-sensitive changes to move forward in a more expeditious manner.

Recommendations & Legislation

In 2027, the Ethics Commission will discontinue the use of [sfethics.org](#) to comply with changes in State law that will require cities and counties move to websites under a “.ca.gov” domain by January 1, 2029, per [AB 1637 \(2023\)](#).

Currently, [Sections 1.161](#) and [1.162](#) of the Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code require campaign advertisements and electioneering communications to include the statement, “Financial disclosures are available at [sfethics.org](#).” Given that the Ethics Commission will soon transition to a different web domain, the web address referenced in disclaimer language will no longer be applicable when the new domain becomes active. To implement this required change, the proposed legislation replaces the outdated website reference and ensures the disclaimers remain accurate following the Commission’s domain transition.

This ordinance making this change is provided as [Attachment 1](#). The legislative digest for this ordinance is provided as [Attachment 2](#). This legislation would enact the following changes:

1. **Amend Article I, Chapter 1 – Section 1.161** by changing the text in subsections (a)(2) and (a)(4) to replace “sfethics.org” with “_____ (insert the website address designated by the Ethics Commission).”
2. **Amend Article I, Chapter 1 – Section 1.162** by changing the text of subsection (a)(1) to replace “sfethics.org” with “_____ (insert the website address designated by the Ethics Commission).”

This change away from a specific web address being included in the Code will allow the Commission to designate its new web address for inclusion in disclaimers when the old address is discontinued next year. Not having a specific web address in the Code will also enable any future web address changes to be made by the Commission, without the need for additional legislation.

There have been minor formatting adjustments made in this legislation to be consistent with other parts of the Code, but the core amendments to the disclaimer requirements are the same as those the Commission approved last September ([File No. 250868](#)).

Next Steps

Staff recommend the Commission vote to approve the ordinance as drafted in [Attachment 1](#). This ordinance requires supermajority approval from both the Ethics Commission and the Board of Supervisors to be enacted. If approved by the Commission, the ordinance will then be introduced at the Board of Supervisors, where President Mandelman plans to sponsor the legislation. If the ordinance is approved by the Board of Supervisors without substantive amendments or significant delays, it could be operative in early 2027, before the Commission's web domain is updated.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: [Draft Legislation on Website Disclaimer Requirements](#)

Attachment 2: [Legislative Digest on Website Disclaimer Requirements](#)

Attachment 1

[Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code - Ethics Commission Website To Use In Campaign Disclaimers]

Ordinance amending the Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code to require the Ethics Commission to designate the website to be used in campaign advertisement and electioneering disclaimers.

NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
Additions to Codes are in single-underline italics Times New Roman font.
Deletions to Codes are in ~~strikethrough italics Times New Roman font~~.
Board amendment additions are in double-underlined Arial font.
Board amendment deletions are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
Asterisks (* * * *) indicate the omission of unchanged Code subsections or parts of tables.

Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

Section 1. Article I, Chapter 1 of the Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code is hereby amended by revising Sections 1.161 and 1.162, to read as follows:

SEC. 1.161. CAMPAIGN ADVERTISEMENTS.

(a) DISCLAIMERS. In addition to complying with the disclaimer requirements set forth in Chapter 4 of the California Political Reform Act, California Government Code sections 84100 et seq., and its enabling regulations, all committees making expenditures which support or oppose any candidate for City elective office or any City measure shall also comply with the following additional requirements:

* * * *

(2) WEBSITE REFERRAL. Each disclaimer required by the Political Reform Act or its enabling regulations and by this Section 1.161 shall be followed in the same required format, size, and speed by the following phrase: "Financial disclosures are available at _____ ~~sfethics.org~~ (insert the website address designated by the Ethics Commission)." A

1 substantially similar statement that specifies the website may be used as an alternative in
2 audio communications.

3 * * * *

4 (4) CANDIDATE ADVERTISEMENTS. Advertisements by candidate
5 committees shall include the following disclaimer statements: "Paid for by _____ (insert
6 the name of the candidate committee)." and "Financial disclosures are available at _____
7 ~~sfethics.org~~(insert the website address designated by the Ethics Commission)." Except as provided in
8 subsections (a)(3) and (a)(5), the statements' format, size, and speed shall comply with the
9 disclaimer requirements for independent expenditures for or against a candidate set forth in
10 the Political Reform Act and its enabling regulations.

11 * * * *

12 **SEC. 1.162. ELECTIONEERING COMMUNICATIONS.**

13 (a) DISCLAIMERS.

14 (1) Every electioneering communication for which a statement is filed pursuant
15 to subsection (b) shall include the following disclaimer: "Paid for by _____ (insert the
16 name of the person who paid for the communication)." and "Financial disclosures are
17 available at _____~~sfethics.org~~(insert the website address designated by the Ethics
18 Commission)."

19 * * * *

20 Section 2. Prerequisites for Enactment; Super-Majority Vote Requirements. The
21 enactment of Section 1 of this ordinance is subject to provisions of the Campaign and
22 Governmental Conduct Code that require the amendments to be approved by the Ethics
23 Commission by a supermajority vote of at least four members of the Commission, and
24 approved by a supermajority vote of at least eight members of the Board of Supervisors.

1 Section 3. Scope of Ordinance. In enacting this ordinance, the Board of Supervisors
2 intends to amend only those words, phrases, paragraphs, subsections, sections, articles,
3 numbers, punctuation marks, charts, diagrams, or any other constituent parts of the Municipal
4 Code that are explicitly shown in this ordinance as additions, deletions, Board amendment
5 additions, and Board amendment deletions in accordance with the "Note" that appears under
6 the official title of the ordinance.

7
8 Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective on the 31st day after
9 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the
10 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board
11 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

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13 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
14 DAVID CHIU, City Attorney

15 By: /s/ Michael Gerchow
16 MICHAEL GERCHOW
 Deputy City Attorney

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Attachment 2

FILE NO.

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code - Ethics Commission Website To Use In Campaign Disclaimers]

Ordinance amending the Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code to require the Ethics Commission to designate the website to be used in campaign advertisement and electioneering disclaimers.

Existing Law

Under current law, committees making expenditures supporting or opposing a candidate for City elective office or a City measure must include a disclaimer on all candidate advertisements or electioneering communications that “Financial disclosures are available at *sfethics.org*.”

Amendments to Current Law

The proposed ordinance would continue with the same disclaimer but would require committees to use a new website address designated by the Ethics Commission.

Background Information

The Ethics Commission is in the process of updating its website to comply with new state law requirements after which the website “*sfethics.org*” will no longer be in use.

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