

# New Hampshire Steps Up Campaign Finance & Lobbying Enforcement

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In a recent report to the state legislature, New Hampshire Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald quietly announced that his office has begun ramping up enforcement of the state's campaign finance and lobbying laws. While past budgeting and other issues limited the state's prior emphasis on enforcement, federal PACs, and other organizations participating in the state's political processes should take note of this important change in the state's enforcement outlook.

According to the report, the Attorney General has created a separate division within his office specifically responsible for "investigating, enforcing, and prosecuting" violations of the state laws. This unit is now staffed by a full-time assistant attorney general and elections investigator. For the first time, these individuals have begun to systematically examine the disclosure statements filed by all candidates and political committees, including those filed during the 2018 primary and general election season. The office is also conducting random audits of financial disclosures. Following up on these developments, a recent news story notes that the Attorney General sent out letters to 73 political entities earlier this month related to alleged campaign finance reporting errors.

As part of his report, the Attorney General also detailed several enforcement metrics and other items of interest. For example, the Attorney General has received 130 complaints since September 2016, including 27 complaints already in 2018, with a quarter of those complaints involving political advertising or campaign finance violations. The report also notes that many robocall and push poll-related investigations remain open, including some involving allegations that date back to 2012. Thus, despite New Hampshire's small size, those engaging in the state should check to make sure

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## Practice Areas

Election Law & Government Ethics

they are in compliance with the applicable laws.