

North Carolina Changes Electioneering Communications Law

September 2006

In early August 2006, Governor Michael F. Easley of North Carolina signed into law former H.B. 1847, which made a number of technical changes to the state's campaign finance law and, most importantly, made two changes to the state's regulation of electioneering communications.

First, the new law eliminates the explicit statutory exception to the prohibition on corporate electioneering communications that had existed for 501(c)(4) social welfare organizations.

Second, the new law lowers the electioneering communications threshold for mass mailings and telephone banks. Now, during the 30-day pre-primary election period and the 60-day pre-general election period, corporations and unions may not send mass mailings or make telephone calls about a legislative candidate if 2,500 or more people in the legislative district receive the mailings or calls. The previous threshold was 5,000 persons.

The new law did not change the threshold for statewide candidates, nor did it change the threshold for radio or television communications within the blackout period.

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