



# Four Petal Alderman Fail to File Mandatory Financial Disclosure Form

Four of Petal's seven-member Board of Aldermen have broken Mississippi ethics law by failing to file the mandatory Statement of Economic Interest (SEI). Three of the four board members have broken the law repeatedly.

According to the Ethics Commission website, Petal Alderman-at-Large William King last filed an SEI for 2016, and Ward 2 Alderman Steve Stringer's last filing was for 2015. Ward 3 Alderman Clint Moore apparently never has filed the mandatory report in the seven years he has held office. M1 Ward 6 Alderman Craig Bullock filed the SEI most recently in 2017; the Ethics Commission website shows no SEI for Bullock for 2018 or for 2012.

Aldermen are among elected officials and public servants required by law to file the SEI with the Ethics Commission by May 1 every year. (Candidates must file within 15 days of the qualifying deadline. A person appointed to office must file within 30 days of the appointment.)

The electronic report requires each respondent to disclose his

or her income sources, as well as those of his or her spouse and anyone over the age of 21 who lives in the same house. The idea is to highlight potential conflicts of interest for the public, so the SEI does not ask for income amounts.

If you were to dismiss this form as just more government paperwork, you'd be making a huge mistake. It's critical to keeping you and others informed about the business interests of your government representatives. In fact, a situation that came to light in Petal earlier this year illustrates perfectly why the SEI is mandatory: the Hattiesburg Patriot learned in August that Alderman Bullock has been involved in an apparent conflict of interest created when his company, A1 Graphics, received \$7,700 in 2018-19 from the Petal Sports Association (PSA), a joint venture with the City of Petal. A1 Graphics provided umpire shirts, tournament t shirts, coaches' shirts and uniforms, and tournament signs, and may have sold uniforms and/or team gear to PSA teams directly. [Click here to read more.](#)

You can find the full law in the Mississippi State Code of 1972 beginning at 25-4-25, but to summarize:

Anyone who fails to file the SEI within one year of the deadline or who knowingly fails to disclose required information is guilty of a crime and can be fined as much as \$10,000. The Ethics Commission may grant permission for supplemental filings when corrections are needed.

Specifically, those who must file the Statement of Economic Intent are:

1. All elected officials (except federal) whether it be statewide, district, county, municipal or any other political subdivision (except members of boards of levee commissioners and election commissioners)
2. All school board members, whether elected or appointed
3. Candidates for elected office
4. Persons appointed to fill a vacancy in an elected office

5. Executive directors or heads of state agencies, by whatever name they are designated, who are paid in part or in whole, directly or indirectly, from funds appropriated or authorized to be expended by the Legislature
6. Presidents and trustees of all state-supported colleges, universities and junior colleges
7. Members of any state board, commission or agency, including the Mississippi Ethics Commission, charged with the administration or expenditure of public funds (except advisory boards or commissions)
8. Executive directors or board members of certain economic development entities (EDDs, REDAs, CDCs, Industrial Council) and airport authorities

The SEI must include the following information for the previous calendar year:

- (a) The full name and mailing address of the filer;
- (b) The filer's title, position and offices in government;
- (c) All other occupations of the filer, the filer's spouse or any person over the age of 21 who lived in the filer's household during the entire preceding calendar year;
- (d) The names and addresses of all businesses in which the filer, the filer's spouse or any person over the age of 21 who lived in the filer's household during the entire preceding calendar year held a position, and the name of the position, if the person:
  - (i) Receives more than \$2,500.00 a year in income from the business;
  - (ii) Owns ten percent or more of the fair market value in the business;
  - (iii) Owns an ownership interest in the business, the fair market value of which exceeds \$5,000.00; or
  - (iv) Is an employee, director or officer of the business;

(e) The identity of the person represented and the nature of the business involved in any representation or intervention for compensation for any person or business before any authority of state or local government, excluding the courts, on any matter other than uncontested or routine matters. This applies only to:

(1) an elected official

(2) an executive director or head of a state agency or

(3) a president or trustee of a state-supported college, university or

community or junior college, including members of the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges and the State Board of Institutions of Higher Learning.

(f) All public bodies, whether federal, state or local government, from which

the filer, the filer's spouse or any person over the age of 21 who lived in

the filer's household during the entire preceding calendar year received

compensation in excess of \$1,000.00 during the preceding calendar year,

whether the compensation was paid directly or indirectly through another

person or business.