

By: Senator(s) Sojourner

To: Elections

## SENATE BILL NO. 2504

1 AN ACT TO CREATE SECTION 23-15-299.1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF  
2 1972, TO PROHIBIT ANY PERSON WHO IS A CANDIDATE FOR ANY PUBLIC  
3 OFFICE FROM APPEARING IN PUBLICLY FUNDED ADVERTISEMENTS DURING THE  
4 YEAR BEFORE OR THE YEAR OF THE STATEWIDE GENERAL ELECTION; TO  
5 PROVIDE THAT THOSE CANDIDATES WHO VIOLATE THE PROHIBITION SHALL BE  
6 DISQUALIFIED FROM HOLDING ANY PUBLIC OFFICE UNTIL THE NEXT  
7 STATEWIDE GENERAL ELECTION; TO AMEND SECTIONS 23-15-297,  
8 23-15-299, 23-15-359 AND 23-15-976, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
9 CONFORM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

11 **SECTION 1.** The following shall be codified as Section  
12 23-15-299.1, Mississippi Code of 1972:

13 23-15-299.1. (1) For the purposes of this section, these  
14 words and phrases are defined as follows:

15 (a) "Advertisement" means material, content, display or  
16 publication related to any state agency or local governmental  
17 entity or any service available through any state agency or local  
18 governmental entity that is: (i) disseminated by radio, internet  
19 or television; or (ii) printed in any newspaper, magazine,  
20 billboard or placard; and (iii) paid for with federal, state  
21 agency or local governmental funds. The term "advertisement"



shall not include items such as newsletters, public information pamphlets, directional signage, stationery, letterhead or business cards.

(b) "Agency" is defined in Section 25-17-1(a).

(c) "Local governmental entity" is defined in Section 25-17-1(b).

(2) A person who is a candidate for election to the same or another public office shall not permit the use of his name, voice or likeness in any advertisement during the year before or the year of the state general election. When the person pays the required fee to enter an election for any public office to the proper official, he shall also file an affidavit stating that he has not violated the provisions of this section.

(3) No state agency or local governmental entity shall expend funds for advertisements that use the name, voice or likeness of any person who is a candidate for election to any public office during the period set forth in subsection (2) of this section.

**SECTION 2.** (1) Any person elected to the same or another public office who fails to file an affidavit stating that he has not violated the provisions of Section 23-15-299.1 may be compelled to file the affidavit by an action in the nature of a mandamus. Unless and until he files the required affidavit, the person:



46           (a) Shall not be certified as nominated for election or  
47 as elected to office;

48           (b) Shall not receive any salary or other remuneration  
49 for the office.

50       (2) A person elected to the same or another public office  
51 who fails to file the affidavit by the date his salary or  
52 remuneration is payable shall be in willful and deliberate and  
53 substantial violation of the provisions and prohibitions of  
54 Section 23-15-299.1 and shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. Upon  
55 conviction, the person shall be punished by a fine in a sum not to  
56 exceed Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00) or imprisoned for not  
57 longer than six (6) months, or by both fine and imprisonment.

58       (3) Any person elected to the same or another public office  
59 who makes any false affidavit, or knowingly swears or affirms  
60 falsely to any matter or thing required by the terms of Section  
61 23-15-299.1 to be sworn to or affirmed, is guilty of perjury and  
62 upon conviction shall be punishable by fine or imprisonment as  
63 other persons committing perjury are punishable.

64       (4) The Secretary of State shall notify the Attorney General  
65 of those candidates in violation of subsection (2) or (3) of this  
66 section, and the Attorney General, upon receiving the notice,  
67 shall prosecute those candidates. A conviction under subsection  
68 (2) or (3) of this section shall disqualify the candidate from  
69 holding the office to which he was elected or any other public  
70 office until the date of the statewide general election next



71 occurring after the violation. The conviction may be appealed to  
72 the Supreme Court in the manner provided by law on an expedited  
73 basis.

74 **SECTION 3.** Section 23-15-297, Mississippi Code of 1972,  
75 is amended as follows:

76 23-15-297. (1) All candidates, upon entering the race for  
77 party nominations for office, shall first file an affidavit if  
78 required under this section and Section 23-15-299.1 and pay to the  
79 proper officer as provided for in Section 23-15-299 for each  
80 primary election the following amounts:

81 (a) Candidates for Governor, the amount determined by  
82 the state executive committee of the party pursuant to subsection  
83 (2) of this section but no less than One Thousand Dollars  
84 (\$1,000.00) and no more than Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00).

85 (b) Candidates for Lieutenant Governor, Attorney  
86 General, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, Auditor of Public  
87 Accounts, Commissioner of Insurance, Commissioner of Agriculture  
88 and Commerce, State Highway Commissioner and State Public Service  
89 Commissioner, the amount determined by the state executive  
90 committee of the party pursuant to subsection (2) of this section  
91 but no less than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) and no more than  
92 Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00).

93 (c) Candidates for State Senator and State  
94 Representative, Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00).



(d) Candidates for district attorney, Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00).

(e) Candidates for sheriff, chancery clerk, circuit clerk, tax assessor, tax collector, county attorney, county superintendent of education and board of supervisors, One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00).

(f) Candidates for county surveyor, county coroner, justice court judge and constable, One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00).

(g) Candidates for United States Senator, the amount determined by the state executive committee of the party pursuant to subsection (2) of this section but no less than One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) and no more than Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00).

(h) Candidates for United States Representative, the amount determined by the state executive committee of the party pursuant to subsection (2) of this section but no less than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) and no more than Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00).

(2) (a) The state executive committee of a political party shall set the entry fee that a candidate is to pay upon entering the race for party nominations for the offices listed in paragraphs (a), (b), (g) and (h) of subsection (1) of this section and Section 23-15-1093(2) (a). The authority granted under this subsection shall not be exercised by any state executive committee



of a political party for any individual office more than once every two (2) years, beginning July 1, 2022.

(b) Each state executive committee of a political party shall report the entry fee determined for each office to the Secretary of State by October 1 of the year before the election is held for that office. If a state executive committee does not meet the deadline in this paragraph for any office, the minimum entry fee shall be assessed for the office in that party's primary election during that election cycle.

(3) All independent candidates and special election candidates entering the race for office shall pay to the proper officer as provided for in Section 23-15-299 the following amounts:

(a) Candidates for Governor, One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00).

(b) Candidates for Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, Auditor of Public Accounts, Commissioner of Insurance, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, State Highway Commissioner and State Public Service Commissioner, Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00).

(c) Candidates for district attorney, State Senator and State Representative, Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00).

(d) Candidates for sheriff, chancery clerk, circuit clerk, tax assessor, tax collector, county attorney, county



superintendent of education and board of supervisors, One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00).

(e) Candidates for county surveyor, county coroner, justice court judge and constable, One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00).

(f) Candidates for United States Senator, One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00).

(g) Candidates for United States Representative, Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00).

(4) The Secretary of State shall publish the fees listed in this section and Section 23-15-1093 no later than forty-five (45) days before the qualifying period begins for each office.

**SECTION 4.** Section 23-15-299, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

23-15-299. (1) (a) Assessments made pursuant to subsection (1)(a), (b), (c) and (d) of Section 23-15-297 shall be paid by each candidate who seeks a nomination in the political party election to the secretary of the state executive committee with which the candidate is affiliated by 5:00 p.m. on February 1 of the year in which the primary election for the office is held or on the date of the qualifying deadline provided by statute for the office, whichever is earlier; however, no such assessments may be paid before January 1 of the year in which the primary election for the office is held. If February 1 or the date of the qualifying deadline provided by statute for the office occurs on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, then the assessments required



to be paid by this paragraph (a) shall be paid by 5:00 p.m. on the business day immediately following the Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

(b) Assessments made pursuant to subsection (3)(a), (b) and (c) of Section 23-15-297 shall be paid by each independent candidate or special election candidate to the Secretary of State by 5:00 p.m. on February 1 of the year in which the primary election for the office is held or on the date of the qualifying deadline provided by statute for the office, whichever is earlier; however, no such assessments may be paid before January 1 of the year in which the primary election for the office is held. If February 1 or the date of the qualifying deadline provided by statute for the office occurs on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, then the assessments required to be paid by this paragraph (b) shall be paid by 5:00 p.m. on the business day immediately following the Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

(2) (a) Assessments made pursuant to subsection (1)(e) and (f) of Section 23-15-297, shall be paid by each candidate who seeks a nomination in the political party election to the circuit clerk of that candidate's county of residence by 5:00 p.m. on February 1 of the year in which the primary election for the office is held or on the date of the qualifying deadline provided by statute for the office, whichever is earlier; however, no such assessments may be paid before January 1 of the year in which the election for the office is held. If February 1 or the date of the





193 qualifying deadline provided by statute for the office occurs on a  
194 Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, then the assessments required  
195 to be paid by this paragraph (a) shall be paid by 5:00 p.m. on the  
196 business day immediately following the Saturday, Sunday or legal  
197 holiday. The circuit clerk shall forward the fee and all  
198 necessary information to the secretary of the proper county  
199 executive committee within two (2) business days. No candidate  
200 may attempt to qualify with any political party that does not have  
201 a duly organized county executive committee, and the circuit clerk  
202 shall not accept any assessments paid for nonlegislative offices  
203 pursuant to subsection (1)(e) and (f) of Section 23-15-297 if the  
204 circuit clerk does not have contact information for the secretary  
205 of the county executive committee for that political party.

206 (b) Assessments made pursuant to subsection (3)(d) and  
207 (e) of Section 23-15-297 shall be paid by each independent  
208 candidate or special election candidate to the circuit clerk of  
209 that candidate's county of residence by 5:00 p.m. on February 1 of  
210 the year in which the primary election for the office is held or  
211 on the date of the qualifying deadline provided by statute for the  
212 office, whichever is earlier; however, no such assessments may be  
213 paid before January 1 of the year in which the primary election  
214 for the office is held. If February 1 or the date of the  
215 qualifying deadline provided by statute for the office occurs on a  
216 Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, then the assessments required  
217 to be paid by this paragraph (b) shall be paid by 5:00 p.m. on the



business day immediately following the Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. The circuit clerk shall forward the fee and all necessary information to the secretary of the proper county election commission within two (2) business days.

(3) (a) Assessments made pursuant to subsection (1)(g) and (h) of Section 23-15-297 must be paid by each candidate who seeks a nomination in the political party election to the secretary of the state executive committee with which the candidate is affiliated by 5:00 p.m. sixty (60) days before the presidential preference primary in years in which a presidential preference primary is held; however, no such assessments may be paid before January 1 of the year in which the primary election for the office is held. Assessments made pursuant to subsection (1)(g) and (h) of Section 23-15-297, in years when a presidential preference primary is not being held, shall be paid by each candidate who seeks a nomination in the political party election to the secretary of the state executive committee with which the candidate is affiliated by 5:00 p.m. on March 1 of the year in which the primary election for the office is held; however, no such assessments may be paid before January 1 of the year in which the primary election for the office is held. If sixty (60) days before the presidential preference primary in years in which a presidential preference primary is held, March 1, or the date of the qualifying deadline provided by statute for the office occurs on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, then the assessments



required to be paid by this paragraph (a) shall be paid by 5:00 p.m. on the business day immediately following the Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

(b) Assessments made pursuant to subsection (3)(f) and (g) of Section 23-15-297 must be paid by each independent candidate or special election candidate to the Secretary of State by 5:00 p.m. sixty (60) days before the presidential preference primary in years in which a presidential preference primary is held; however, no such assessments may be paid before January 1 of the year in which the primary election for the office is held. Assessments made pursuant to subsection (3)(f) and (g) of Section 23-15-297, in years when a presidential preference primary is not being held, shall be paid by each independent candidate or special election candidate to the Secretary of State by 5:00 p.m. on March 1 of the year in which the primary election for the office is held; however, no such assessments may be paid before January 1 of the year in which the primary election for the office is held. If sixty (60) days before the presidential preference primary in years in which a presidential preference primary is held, March 1, or the date of the qualifying deadline provided by statute for the office occurs on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, then the assessments required to be paid by this paragraph (b) shall be paid by 5:00 p.m. on the business day immediately following the Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.



267           (4)   (a)   The fees paid pursuant to subsections (1), (2) and  
268   (3) of this section shall be accompanied by a written statement  
269   containing the name and address of the candidate, the party with  
270   which he or she is affiliated, if applicable, the email address of  
271   the candidate, if any, and the office for which he or she is a  
272   candidate.

273           (b)   The state executive committee shall transmit to the  
274   Secretary of State a copy of the written statements accompanying  
275   the fees paid pursuant to subsections (1) and (2) of this section.  
276   All copies must be received by the Office of the Secretary of  
277   State by not later than 6:00 p.m. on the date of the qualifying  
278   deadline; provided, however, the failure of the Office of the  
279   Secretary of State to receive such copies by 6:00 p.m. on the date  
280   of the qualifying deadline shall not affect the qualification of a  
281   person who pays the required fee and files the required statement  
282   by 5:00 p.m. on the date of the qualifying deadline. The name of  
283   any person who pays the required fee and files the required  
284   statement after 5:00 p.m. on the date of the qualifying deadline  
285   shall not be placed on the primary election ballot or the general  
286   election ballot.

287           (5)   The Secretary of State or the secretary or circuit clerk  
288   to whom such payments are made shall promptly receipt for same  
289   stating the office for which the candidate making payment is  
290   running and the political party with which he or she is  
291   affiliated, if applicable, and he or she shall keep an itemized



292 account in detail showing the exact time and date of the receipt  
293 of each payment received by him or her and, where applicable, the  
294 date of the postmark on the envelope containing the fee and from  
295 whom, and for what office the party paying same is a candidate.

296 (6) The secretaries of the proper executive committee shall  
297 hold the funds to be finally disposed of by order of their  
298 respective executive committees. The funds may be used or  
299 disbursed by the executive committee receiving same to pay all  
300 necessary traveling or other necessary expenses of the members of  
301 the executive committee incurred in discharging their duties as  
302 committee members, and of their secretary and may pay the  
303 secretary such salary as may be reasonable. The Secretary of  
304 State shall deposit any qualifying fees received from candidates  
305 into the Elections Support Fund established in Section 23-15-5.

306 (7) (a) Upon receipt of the proper fee and all necessary  
307 information, the proper executive committee or the Secretary of  
308 State, whichever is applicable, shall then determine at the time  
309 of the qualifying deadline, unless otherwise provided by law,  
310 whether each candidate is a qualified elector of the state, state  
311 district, county or county district which they seek to serve, and  
312 whether each candidate meets all other qualifications to hold the  
313 office he or she is seeking or presents absolute proof that he or  
314 she will, subject to no contingencies, meet all qualifications on  
315 or before the date of the general or special election at which he  
316 or she could be elected to office. The proper executive committee



or the Secretary of State, whichever is applicable, shall determine whether the candidate has taken the steps necessary to qualify for more than one (1) office at the election. The committee or the Secretary of State, whichever is applicable, shall also determine whether any candidate has been convicted (i) of any felony in a court of this state, (ii) on or after December 8, 1992, of any offense in another state which is a felony under the laws of this state, (iii) of any felony in a federal court on or after December 8, 1992, or (iv) of any offense that involved the misuse or abuse of his or her office or money coming into his or her hands by virtue of the office. Excepted from the above are convictions of manslaughter and violations of the United States Internal Revenue Code or any violations of the tax laws of this state.

(b) The executive committee shall determine whether the candidate has filed an affidavit as required under Section 23-15-299.1. If the proper executive committee or the Secretary of State, whichever is applicable, finds that a candidate either (i) is not a qualified elector, (ii) does not meet all qualifications to hold the office he or she seeks and fails to provide absolute proof, subject to no contingencies, that he or she will meet the qualifications on or before the date of the general or special election at which he or she could be elected, \* \* \* (iii) has been convicted of a felony or other disqualifying offense as described in paragraph (a) of this



subsection, and not pardoned, or (iv) has not filed an affidavit  
as required under Section 23-15-299.1, then the executive  
committee shall notify the candidate and give the candidate an  
opportunity to be heard. The executive committee shall mail  
notice to the candidate at least three (3) business days before  
the hearing to the address provided by the candidate on the  
qualifying forms, and the committee shall attempt to contact the  
candidate by telephone, email and facsimile if the candidate  
provided this information on the forms. If the candidate fails to  
appear at the hearing or to prove that he or she meets all  
qualifications to hold the office subject to no contingencies,  
then the name of that candidate shall not be placed upon the  
ballot.

(c) If the proper executive committee or the Secretary  
of State, whichever is applicable, determines that the candidate  
has taken the steps necessary to qualify for more than one (1)  
office at the election, the action required by Section 23-15-905,  
shall be taken.

(d) Where there is but one (1) candidate for each  
office contested at the primary election, the proper executive  
committee or the Secretary of State, whichever is applicable, when  
the time has expired within which the names of candidates shall be  
furnished shall declare such candidates the nominees.

(8) No candidate may qualify by filing the information  
required by this section by using the internet.



367           **SECTION 5.** Section 23-15-359, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
368 amended as follows:

369           23-15-359. (1) Except as provided in this section, the  
370 ballot shall contain the names of all party nominees certified by  
371 the appropriate executive committee, and independent and special  
372 election candidates who have timely filed petitions containing the  
373 required signatures and assessments that must be paid pursuant to  
374 Section 23-15-297, if the candidates and nominees meet all of the  
375 qualifications to hold the office sought. A petition requesting  
376 that an independent or special election candidate's name be placed  
377 on the ballot for any office shall be filed as provided for in  
378 subsection (3) or (4) of this section, as appropriate, and shall  
379 be signed by not less than the following number of qualified  
380 electors:

381                   (a) For an office elected by the state at large, not  
382 less than one thousand (1,000) qualified electors.

383                   (b) For an office elected by the qualified electors of  
384 a Supreme Court district, not less than three hundred (300)  
385 qualified electors.

386                   (c) For an office elected by the qualified electors of  
387 a congressional district, not less than two hundred (200)  
388 qualified electors.

389                   (d) For an office elected by the qualified electors of  
390 a circuit or chancery court district, not less than one hundred  
391 (100) qualified electors.





392 (e) For an office elected by the qualified electors of  
393 a senatorial or representative district, not less than fifty (50)  
394 qualified electors.

395 (f) For an office elected by the qualified electors of  
396 a county, not less than fifty (50) qualified electors.

397 (g) For an office elected by the qualified electors of  
398 a supervisors district or justice court district, not less than  
399 fifteen (15) qualified electors.

400 (h) For the Office of President of the United States, a  
401 party nominee or independent candidate shall pay an assessment in  
402 the amount of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00).

403 (2) (a) Unless the petition or fee, whichever is  
404 applicable, required above shall be filed as provided for in  
405 subsection (3), (4) or (5) of this section, as appropriate, the  
406 name of the person requested to be a candidate, unless nominated  
407 by a political party, shall not be placed upon the ballot. The  
408 ballot shall contain the names of each candidate for each office,  
409 and the names shall be listed under the name of the political  
410 party that candidate represents as provided by law and as  
411 certified to the circuit clerk by the state executive committee of  
412 the political party. In the event the candidate qualifies as an  
413 independent as provided in this section, he or she shall be listed  
414 on the ballot as an independent candidate.



415 (b) The name of an independent or special election  
416 candidate who dies before the printing of the ballots, shall not  
417 be placed on the ballots.

418 (3) Petitions for offices described in paragraphs (a), (b),  
419 (c), (d) and (e) of subsection (1) of this section and affidavits  
420 if required under Section 23-15-299.1 shall be filed with the  
421 Secretary of State by no later than 5:00 p.m. on the same date or  
422 business day, as applicable, by which candidates are required to  
423 pay the fee provided for in Section 23-15-297; however, no  
424 petition may be filed before January 1 of the year in which the  
425 election for the office is held.

426 (4) Petitions for offices described in paragraphs (f) and  
427 (g) of subsection (1) of this section and affidavits if required  
428 under Section 23-15-299.1 shall be filed with the proper circuit  
429 clerk by no later than 5:00 p.m. on the same date by which  
430 candidates are required to pay the fee provided for in Section  
431 23-15-297; however, no petition may be filed before January 1 of  
432 the year in which the election for the office is held. The  
433 circuit clerk shall notify the county election commissioners of  
434 all persons who have filed petitions with the clerk. The  
435 notification shall occur within two (2) business days and shall  
436 contain all necessary information.

437 (5) The assessment for the office described in paragraph (h)  
438 of subsection (1) of this section shall be paid to the Secretary  
439 of State. The Secretary of State shall deposit any qualifying



fees received from candidates into the Elections Support Fund established in Section 23-15-5.

(6) The election commissioners may also have printed upon the ballot any local issue election matter that is authorized to be held on the same date as the regular or general election pursuant to Section 23-15-375; however, the ballot form of the local issue must be filed with the election commissioners by the appropriate governing authority not less than sixty (60) days before the date of the election.

(7) The provisions of this section shall not apply to municipal elections or to the election of the offices of justice of the Supreme Court, judge of the Court of Appeals, circuit judge, chancellor, county court judge and family court judge.

(8) Nothing in this section shall prohibit special elections to fill vacancies in either house of the Legislature from being held as provided in Section 23-15-851. In all elections conducted under the provisions of Section 23-15-851, there shall be printed on the ballot the name of any candidate who, not having been nominated by a political party, shall have been requested to be a candidate for any office by a petition filed with the Secretary of State and signed by not less than fifty (50) qualified electors.

(9) (a) The appropriate election commission shall determine whether each candidate is a qualified elector of the state, state district, county or county district they seek to serve, and whether each candidate meets all other qualifications to hold the



office he or she is seeking or presents absolute proof that he or she will, subject to no contingencies, meet all qualifications on or before the date of the general or special election at which he or she could be elected to office. The election commission shall determine whether the candidate has taken the steps necessary to qualify for more than one (1) office at the election. The election commission also shall determine whether any candidate has been convicted (i) of any felony in a court of this state, (ii) on or after December 8, 1992, of any offense in another state which is a felony under the laws of this state, (iii) of any felony in a federal court on or after December 8, 1992, or (iv) of any offense that involved the misuse or abuse of his or her office or money coming into his or her hands by virtue of the office. Excepted from the above are convictions of manslaughter and violations of the United States Internal Revenue Code or any violations of the tax laws of this state.

(b) If the appropriate election commission finds that a candidate either (i) is not a qualified elector, (ii) does not meet all qualifications to hold the office he or she seeks and fails to provide absolute proof, subject to no contingencies, that he or she will meet the qualifications on or before the date of the general or special election at which he or she could be elected, or (iii) has been convicted of a felony or other disqualifying offense as described in paragraph (a) of this subsection, and not pardoned, then the election commission shall



490 notify the candidate and give the candidate an opportunity to be  
491 heard. The election commission shall mail notice to the candidate  
492 at least three (3) business days before the hearing to the address  
493 provided by the candidate on the qualifying forms, and the  
494 committee shall attempt to contact the candidate by telephone,  
495 email and facsimile if the candidate provided this information on  
496 the forms. If the candidate fails to appear at the hearing or to  
497 prove that he or she meets all qualifications to hold the office  
498 subject to no contingencies, then the name of such candidate shall  
499 not be placed upon the ballot. If the appropriate election  
500 commission determines that the candidate has taken the steps  
501 necessary to qualify for more than one (1) office at the election,  
502 the action required by Section 23-15-905, shall be taken.

503 (10) If after the deadline to qualify as a candidate for an  
504 office or after the time for holding any party primary for an  
505 office, only one (1) person has duly qualified to be a candidate  
506 for the office in the general election, the name of that person  
507 shall be placed on the ballot; provided, however, that if not more  
508 than one (1) person duly qualified to be a candidate for each  
509 office on the general election ballot, the election for all  
510 offices on the ballot shall be dispensed with and the appropriate  
511 election commission shall declare each candidate elected without  
512 opposition if the candidate meets all the qualifications to hold  
513 the office as determined pursuant to a review by the election  
514 commission in accordance with the provisions of subsection (9) of



this section and if the candidate has filed all required campaign finance disclosure reports as required by Section 23-15-807.

(11) The petition required by this section may not be filed by using the internet.

**SECTION 6.** Section 23-15-976, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

23-15-976. (1) A judicial office is a nonpartisan office and a candidate for election thereto is prohibited from campaigning or qualifying for such an office based on party affiliation. The Legislature finds that in order to ensure that campaigns for nonpartisan judicial office remain nonpartisan and without any connection to a political party, political parties and any committee or political committee affiliated with a political party shall not engage in fund-raising on behalf of a candidate or officeholder of a nonpartisan judicial office, nor shall a political party or any committee or political committee affiliated with a political party make any contribution to a candidate for nonpartisan judicial office or the political committee of a candidate for nonpartisan judicial office, nor shall a political party or any committee or political committee affiliated with a political party publicly endorse any candidate for nonpartisan judicial office. No candidate or candidate's political committee for nonpartisan judicial office shall accept a contribution from a political party or any committee or political committee affiliated with a political party.



540       (2) A person who is a candidate for election to a judicial  
541 office shall not permit the use of his name, voice or likeness in  
542 any advertisement, as defined in Section 23-15-299.1(1)(a), during  
543 the year of the state general election.

544       **SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
545 and after its passage.

