

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COUNTY CLERK THREATENS TO POST NAUGHTY LIST ON INTERNET

Mount Clemens, MI – The 53 Macomb County campaign committees that failed to file campaign finance reports last week will have their names posted on the Internet by Macomb County Clerk / Register of Deeds Carmella Sabaugh unless they comply. Campaign finance reports list contributions, expenses and debts. Sabaugh said she will post next month the names of all committees still owing reports at that time, 24 of which are repeat offenders. Sabaugh's web site lists committees that owe fines and offers page-by-page access to county and local candidates' campaign finance reports. She started this practice last year and may be the only county clerk to post on the Internet the names of campaign finance violators.

“The Michigan Campaign Finance Act gives clerks few tools to encourage compliance with the law and there are political committees that brazenly ignore the law,” said Rich Robinson, Executive Director of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, and watchdog group. “If a little public notoriety will encourage compliance, I think it's a good idea.”

“Most candidates filed on time and I don't want to embarrass anyone, but the public can't follow the money if campaigns don't file these reports,” said Sabaugh. “To make it easy to file, we're open late on Wednesdays and we even accept faxed reports.”

Most reporting mistakes involve leaving some information blank, making math errors, or simply filing late. When that happens, the county clerk's office sends an Error or Omission Notice, or a Notice of Failure to File to the campaign committee, which must make corrections to the report. These notices are also available on Sabaugh's web site.

The clerk has 655 active campaign committees registered, including county and local candidates. State, federal and judicial candidates register with the secretary of state, not the county clerk. Committees are required to file a campaign finance report unless they filed for a waiver and did not spend \$1,000 or more in an election.

“There is a real opportunity now in Lansing to improve campaign finance laws and voter access,” said Sabaugh. “My hope is the legislature will pass stricter reporting requirements, no-reason absentee voting and same-day voter registration.”

The list of campaign finance violators and Macomb County campaign finance statements may be viewed at <http://www.macombcountymi.gov/clerksoffice>.