

Election and Political Law

What We Do

Navigating the legal landscape around political and electoral activity can be challenging. State and federal laws often overlap, evolve quickly, and carry significant penalties for missteps. Our attorneys help clients understand what they can do, how they can do it, and how to stay compliant while achieving their goals. We counsel clients on:

Election Administration and Compliance

We advise public bodies, candidates, campaign committees, and nonprofit organizations on election planning, ballot drafting, and the legal use of public funds, property, and communication in connection with elections. We ensure compliance with both Michigan and federal laws governing candidate elections, ballot proposals, and ethics restrictions.

Ballot Initiatives, Millage and Bond Elections

We assist with every aspect of the ballot process—from drafting language to navigating Board of Canvassers proceedings. We have extensive experience with statewide ballot measures and millage and bond elections, including legal guidance on timing, voter communication, and campaign restrictions applicable to public entities.

Recounts, Recalls, and Election Challenges

We represent clients in recounts and recall efforts, as well as litigation over ballot eligibility, petition sufficiency, voter access, and constitutional challenges to election laws. We have successfully defended and challenged results in trial and appellate courts and before state election boards.

Campaign Finance and Political Activity

We provide counsel on all aspects of campaign finance, including contribution limits, disclosure requirements, reporting obligations, and fundraising strategy. Our clients include candidate committees, governmental officials, and issue advocacy groups.

Lobbying and Government Ethics Compliance

We advise corporations, nonprofits, and individuals on Michigan's lobbying registration and disclosure laws, gift rules, and revolving door restrictions. We also assist in structuring events, coalition activity, and meetings with public officials to ensure compliance with ethics laws.

Public Official Guidance and Board Proceedings

We regularly represent officials in Board of State Canvassers proceedings, election commission hearings, and other administrative forums. We help elected and appointed officials understand their obligations under election law, campaign finance statutes, and ethics regulations.

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Charter and Constitutional Amendments

We guide governmental clients and advocacy groups through the legal process of amending local charters or the Michigan Constitution, including legal review of proposed language, procedural compliance, and litigation defense.

Election Law Strategy and Litigation

Our team brings decades of experience handling high-profile, high-stakes election law cases in state and federal court. Whether drafting a strategy to avoid litigation or defending against emergency injunctions and constitutional claims, we deliver seasoned, pragmatic representation.

Political Strategy and Compliance

We work closely with clients to structure political activity and public engagement efforts in ways that are both effective and compliant. And when litigation arises, we're seasoned advocates in state and federal courts.

Our team has represented clients in some of the most high-profile and impactful election law matters in Michigan and beyond, collaborating across the firm's litigation, public finance, government, education, and white-collar teams to deliver fully integrated service.

Who We Serve

- Political campaigns and candidates
- State and local governments
- Ballot question committees
- Nonprofits and advocacy organizations
- Corporations and trade associations
- Educational institutions (both Higher Education and K-12 Education)
- Individuals and public officials

Why Clients Choose Us

Miller Canfield's Political and Election Law team brings together deep experience, courtroom-tested advocacy, and a reputation for sound, practical advice. With a decades-long history of serving public entities, elected officials, and issue-driven organizations, we understand the stakes and the sensitivities. We offer clarity in a complex space—and trusted counsel when it matters most.

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Representative Matters

Represented a presidential campaign committee and national and state political party in all 2020 post-election litigation in Michigan.

Secured a federal injunction blocking enforcement of an unconstitutional amendment to Michigan's Campaign Finance Act restricting public bodies from referencing local ballot proposals.

Provided on-going counsel on Michigan election law issues for presidential candidate campaigns.

Represented clients in proceedings before the Board of State Canvassers on election-related ballot initiatives.

Defended city and county clerks in multiple lawsuits involving ballot certification and ballot questions.

Represented a client charged with federal election law violations, resulting in a not guilty verdict at trial.

Led a national initiative on poll worker recruitment in collaboration with the Brennan Center for Justice, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, and Association of Pro Bono Counsel.

Filed amicus briefs and represented advocacy organizations in cases involving absentee voting access, COVID-19 mandates, and voter suppression claims.