



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
OFFICE OF CAMPAIGN & POLITICAL FINANCE

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**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Interested persons  
FROM: Michael J. Sullivan *MJS*  
SUBJECT: Use of Local Access Cable Television for Political Purposes

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This office occasionally receives questions concerning political programming on local access cable television. Such questions, however, are generally within the scope of the federal Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and the related state law, M.G.L. c. 166A, which is administered by the Cable Television Division of the Department of Telecommunications and Cable. That office can be reached at (617) 305-3580 or on-line at <http://www.mass.gov/ocabr/government/oac-agencies/dtc-lp/competition-division/cable-tv-division/>.

Massachusetts state law requires any community antenna television system ("CATV system") that permits any legally qualified candidate for any public office to use its system to employ the facilities of its system or originate and disseminate political campaign material to afford equal opportunities to all other such candidates to use its system for those purposes. See M.G.L. c. 166A(5)(j). Candidates or other interested persons with questions regarding this requirement should contact the Cable Television Division.

In addition, political programming on CATV may also raise issues under the State Conflict of Interest Law, M.G.L. c. 268A. That statute is administered by the State Ethics Commission, which can be reached at 617-371-9500.

