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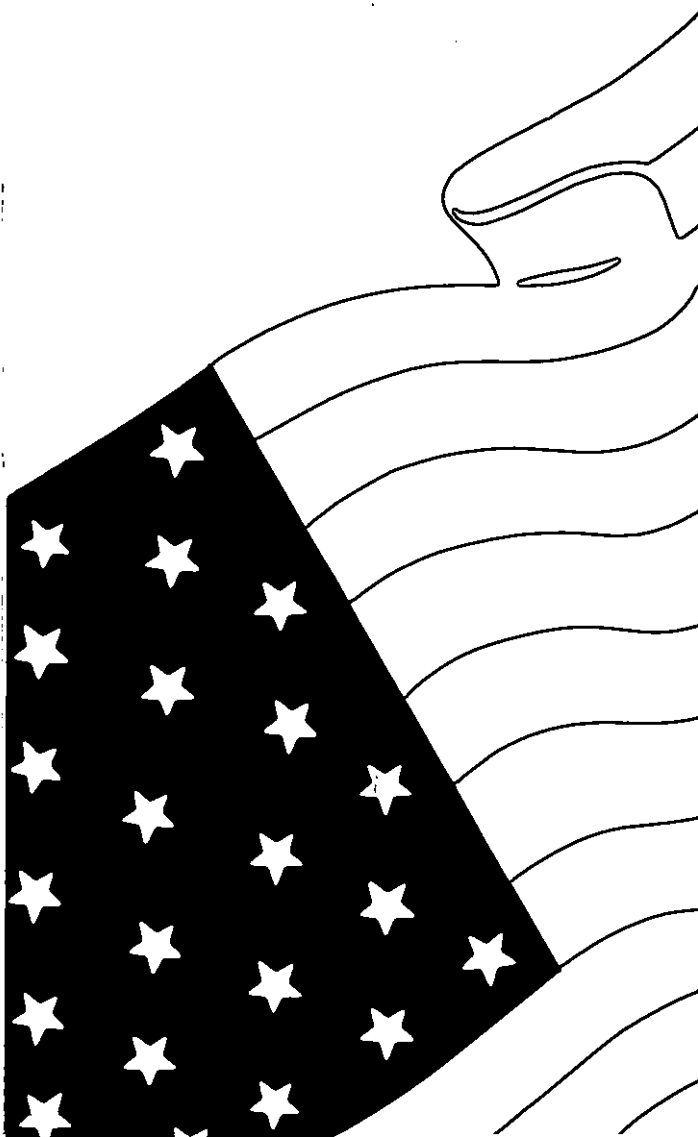
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1988

Know the Rules about Political Campaign Signs





CAMPAIGN SIGNS AND THE 1988 ELECTIONS

Before each election, thousands of political campaign signs dot the landscape of the City of Omaha and the surrounding areas within Douglas County. Campaign signs play an instrumental role in establishing a candidate's identity and acquainting the public with the names of citizens who are running for public office.

Unfortunately, many signs are placed in locations that violate city, county, state and federal laws. In many instances, illegal signs pose a threat to public safety, especially when they appear in intersections, medians, ditches, on bridges, utility poles, interstate exits and entrance ramps, or along sidewalks. In some instances, signs are (illegally) placed on public property or on private property without the owner's permission.


The Douglas County Election Commission has prepared this pamphlet as a service to better inform candidates for political office (and the public they intend to represent) about the laws that govern the use of political signs. In addition, information is provided about the penalties for non-compliance and about the various agencies, departments, or offices that are charged with the responsibility of enforcing the rules and regulations governing political signs.

Vickie Edwards Florine
Election Commissioner

POLITICAL SIGNS WITHIN THE CITY OF OMAHA

It is unlawful for any candidate for any public office, or for any person acting for or on the candidate's behalf, to fasten or attach in any manner whatsoever **any political or campaign sign, poster, advertisement or notice** upon:

- any curbstone
- any portion of any sidewalk or street
- any tree, post, pole, hydrant, bridge
- or other public structure within the limits of any street right of way

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- or upon any corporate property within the jurisdictional area of the city.

Similarly, it is unlawful to fasten or attach in any manner whatsoever any **political or campaign sign, poster, advertisement or notice** upon:

- any private wall, window, door, gate or fence or sign
- or any building
- or upon any residential property without having first obtained the consent of the owner or agent thereof.

What are the penalties for violating the ordinances which govern the placement of political signs?

- The penalties, upon conviction, are a maximum fine of \$500.00 and/or 6 months in jail (Omaha City Code, Section 1-10)

Who should be called if someone is suspected of violating any of the City of Omaha ordinances governing political signs?

- Complaints should be directed to Permits and Inspections at 444-5350 or to the Chief Building Inspector at 444-5364.

Are there any other laws governing the use of political signs?

- Yes. It is unlawful for any person to display any sign which contains anything that is misleading, fraudulent, obscene, immoral or objectionable.
- All political and campaign signs, posters, advertisements or notices shall not exceed a total area of twenty-five (25) square feet in residential areas.
- All political signs, etc. **must be removed within ten days** following the date of an election.
- It is the duty of the owner of the property where such political signs are placed to remove them 10 days after an election.

CAMPAIGN SIGNS ALONG INTERSTATE, PRIMARY, AND SECONDARY HIGHWAY SYSTEMS

No campaign signs, posters, or political advertisements shall be placed within a highway's right of way. This includes intersections, medians, entrance and exit ramps, sidewalks and the ditches and lands that make up the right of way bordering the length of each highway. The "right of way" can often be visually determined by markers, fence-lines, or the placement of utility poles.

State Law (39-1302.06) expressly prohibits the erection of signs on the highway right of way. The penalty (39-1320.10) is a Class V misdemeanor with a maximum fine of \$100.00.

Campaign signs erected on highway right of way will be removed without notice to the owners and stored at the nearest maintenance yard.

Large political signs must be placed on legally erected billboards. The Federal Beautification Act and Nebraska Outdoor Advertising Statutes and Rules and Regulations prohibit the erection of new advertising signs on the interstate or primary highway system. The only exception is in the commercial or industrial zoned areas along the primary highway system. In this instance, a permit from the Department of Roads is required. The fee for the permit is \$15.00. Highways 38 and 85 are on the secondary system and the only restriction on the secondary system is that all signs must be placed on private property. The owners of illegally erected campaign signs which are not on the right of way will be notified by mail to remove such signs.

The District Permit Technician at the Nebraska Department of Roads Office at 108th and I Streets, is in charge of the Advertising Control Program. If you have any questions concerning the placement of political signs along state and federal highways, call him at his office at 331-4661.

CAMPAIGN SIGNS AND POLLING PLACES

As a result of the passage of Legislative Bill 114, in 1984, campaign signs may be erected no closer than **200 feet** from the entrance of a polling place. In addition, all campaign workers and candidates must observe the 200 foot rule when handing out campaign literature and materials near the polls on election day. (Nebraska R.R.S. 32-1221)

STOLEN OR VANDALIZED CAMPAIGN SIGNS

In cases where political signs are being stolen or vandalized, depending on the jurisdiction, the Omaha Police (444-5637) or the Douglas County Sheriff's Office (444-7996) should be contacted to file a formal complaint.

Distributed by:

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Douglas County, Nebraska
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444-7200