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## **FPPC takes numerous, first-ever steps in 2021 to remain ahead of political trends**

The Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), California’s governmental ethics and campaign disclosure agency, released its 2021 Annual Report, which details numerous steps taken by the Commission providing guidance and improving transparency in social media advertising as well as more accountability in high-profile areas like lobbying and limited liability company’s (LLC’s).

The most significant accomplishment of 2021 is Commission approval of the recommendations from its Digital Transparency Task Force (DTTF). The DTTF, made up of members from good government groups, political practitioners, and academics, studied the growing use of digital political advertising. It also looked at ways to improve transparency for the public and accountability of those using the tools and engaging in the practice. Among the DTTF recommendations approved by the Commission and currently being pursued are the establishment of a public, digital advertising database and a study to determine best ways to improve disclosure on such advertisements.

Despite 2021 seeing a high-profile, gubernatorial recall election and the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the FPPC Enforcement Division resolved 1590 cases, approving 266 settlements with \$472,248 dollars in penalties. This follows 2020’s 271 cases with penalties approved by the Commission.

“This report highlights the forward-thinking work done by the Commission, staff and the members of the Task Force on numerous issues in an ever-changing, fast-moving political landscape,” said FPPC Chair Richard C. Miadich. “At a time of skepticism about politics and lack of trust in government, this report should help assure the public of our diligent work to stay ahead of trends, make adjustments where and when necessary, and in the effectiveness of our Enforcement Division to bring accountability to those who have violated the law.”

In addition to the Enforcement figures and the DTTF, the FPPC Annual Report also highlights new and improved transparency requirements on social media influencers and campaigns to show how they are amplifying such content. The Commission also approved new regulations and sponsored a new law requiring more disclosure from LLC’s that take part in political activity, so the public can see who is making the decisions for the LLC. The FPPC also passed new lobbying regulations, expanding transparency and accountability.

The Administration Division and IT Department continued stellar efforts to facilitate remote work capabilities which enabled each Division to continue its work during the challenging environment.

As in 2020, the FPPC provided workshops digitally and continued to see an increase in participation through virtual trainings. The FPPC offered 39 workshops for various jurisdictions and agencies to provide training and

understanding of the law. The Education unit also answered 5,050 phone calls for technical advice and its online tutorials saw 5,841 views over the course of the year.

In addition, the FPPC Legal Division answered 7,105 emails for advice, while researching and issuing 176 Advice Letters in 2021, 69 of which related to Section 1090 of Government Code.

“Our staff does an outstanding job in helping people understand and comply with the law,” said Chair Miadich. “I’m proud of the work done and in 2022 we will continue to search for ways to make the law simpler to understand and follow, to improve transparency, and to strengthen accountability for those subject to the law.”

A link to the full report can be found here: [2021 Annual Report](#)

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