

Make Your Laws PAC, Inc. (MYL PAC)
FEC ID # C00529743
Make Your Laws Advocacy, Inc. (MYL C4)
Make Your Laws, Inc. (MYL C3)
% Nick Staddon, Secretary
122 Pinecrest Rd.
Durham, NC 27705
(717) 469-5695 / core@makeyourlaws.org

Federal Election Commission
Office of General Counsel
999 E Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20463

Re: MYL petition for rulemaking re accessibility of FEC documents

June 3, 2015

Dear Commissioners:

Please accept this petition for rulemaking, per [11 CFR 200.2](#), on behalf of Make Your Laws PAC, Inc. (MYL PAC), Make Your Laws Advocacy, Inc. (MYL C4), and Make Your Laws, Inc. (MYL C3) (collectively, "MYL") to improve the accessibility of FEC documents.

MYL PAC (a 527 hybrid Super PAC), MYL C4 (a 501(c)(4)), and MYL C3 (a 501(c)(3)) are non-partisan organizations whose goals include ensuring that campaign finance law is transparent and accessible to all.

Background: Current FEC practices

First, many of the documents that the FEC publishes, even when they originate from natively electronic formats, are printed, scanned, and then posted as a rasterized¹ PDF.

This makes the documents harder to read, eliminates hyperlinks in the original, degrades the quality of attached images, impairs the document's ability to be searched and indexed, and makes the documents inaccessible to people with visual disabilities. It also violates Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and [36 CFR 1194.22](#).

The United States Access Board (USAB) recently published ([80 FR 10880](#)) a NPRM, [ATBCB-2015-0002](#), whose section E102.6 will explicitly incorporate into law [ISO 14289-1](#) (which

¹ "Rasterized" is where text is turned into an image, e.g. by scan. For instance, the first page of AO 2014-20 Draft A (http://www.fec.gov/agenda/2015/documents/mtgdoc_15-10-a.pdf) is rasterized. Rasterized text can be re-converted back to text using OCR (such as with our AOR itself, <http://saos.fec.gov/aodocs/1308601.pdf>), but that conversion needlessly reduces accessibility with current technology. It eliminates hyperlinks, reduces visual quality, introduces errors in the characters of the text displayed, etc.

defines the technical standards for accessible PDFs, aka [PDF/UA](#)).

Second, the FEC's current practice with draft AOs, NPRMs, and similar documents that have multiple variants or revisions is to publish each document separately.

Because the differences between variants or revisions of such documents are often subtle, this impairs full accessibility, and obscures differences between versions. Reading through the different documents to find the differences is needlessly tedious and error-prone — especially for people with visual disabilities.

Proposed rulemaking

We therefore propose that the Commission adopt three changes to its regulations:

1. Ensure that all FEC-published documents conform to USAB standards, particularly including the accessible PDF standard.² This should include fixing previously published documents.
 - a. Where a document is available in native electronic form, ensure that any alterations (e.g. to add signatures or time-of-receipt stamps) do not degrade the accessibility of the electronic content.
 - b. Where a document is not available in native electronic form, e.g. if it was submitted by mail or fax, pre-process it with OCR software before posting to ensure that it is accessible.
2. Together with any draft AO, NPRM, or similar document, publish "redline" documents clearly showing the differences — both between concurrent drafts (e.g. between version A and B of a draft AO submitted for consideration at the same hearing) and revisions (e.g. between version 1 and 2 of an AO Draft A submitted for consideration at successive hearings).
3. Where a document is submitted by a committee or any other organization, such as an AOR, petition for rulemaking, or comment thereon, require that it be submitted in fully electronic format, such as text or non-rasterized PDF.
 - a. Exceptions should be made to continue to permit *individuals* to submit comments by fax or paper, and for small committees to file disclosure reports by paper — though they should also have the *option* of doing so by electronic format (e.g. emailed PDF).

We expect that this rulemaking would require changes to 11 CFR 2.6, 4.4, 5.4, 6.160, 105.1-105.4, 112.1-112.4, and 200.2.

² We note that Adobe Acrobat Pro has a tool specifically designed to easily automate accessibility, and can also add e.g. timestamps and signatures without needing to print and scan anything.

Conclusion

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. As non-partisan members of the regulated community, we hope to help in improving the accessibility of the Commission's activities to everyone.

We request that the Commission solicit comments from the United States Access Board on this petition, as the USAB has both particular expertise in this area and rulemaking authority on matters relating to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Considering the nature of this petition, and the particular need for a rulemaking *about* accessibility to itself be accessible, we request that the Commission adopt our proposed rules as much as possible, before formal rules are adopted, for the purposes of all proceedings in this rulemaking.

I request the Commission's permission to appear and testify at any hearing on this matter, on behalf of MYL PAC, MYL C4, and MYL C3.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sai

President & Treasurer

Make Your Laws PAC, Inc. (MYL PAC),

Make Your Laws Advocacy, Inc. (MYL C4) *and*

Make Your Laws, Inc. (MYL C3)

<https://www.makeyourlaws.org/fec/accessibility>

sai@makeyourlaws.org

+1 (717) 469-5695