

## POLITICAL ADVERTISING ONLINE



Right around the time of an election, political advertising seems to be all over the place. People will see political ads on different websites online, on billboards, fliers, and even in the local newspapers. Politicians use these ads to exemplify themselves and describe what they plan to do if they are elected for the specific position. Some politicians use advertising to insult and expose other competing politicians in order to prevent people for voting for those competitors during the election.

While the advertisements seem to be everywhere, most people do not now how much it costs for politicians to use the advertisements. This is something that may soon change. The Federal Communications Commission has announced that they plan to set up certain rules which will give groups an idea of how much funding is used to support these political ads.

Political files may soon become public documents. The documents will state information about the campaign, the candidate, and the type of advertisement that has been used. The public document will also list the cost of the advertisements. While such documents may be made public, they will not be listed online.

Michael Copps, the Federal Communications Commission Commissioner, has said, "It proposes that television broadcasters move their public files online, to a site hosted by the FCC, which I hope will be searchable and aggregative and therefore offer real opportunity for comparative analysis and wide public understanding." Copps has also said, "Without that kind of searchability, online disclosure would be small improvement over having the file kept in the broadcast station's basement."

This new rule will likely start for the 2012 elections. The decision to make this information public is favored by many. This gives people the opportunity to know where the money is being spent and how much of it is being spent for these campaign-related things.

The vice president of Media Access Project, Jay Schwartzman, has commented on the announcement and has said, "Today's action makes useful information available, and makes it much more accessible to the public. Much more needs to be done, and the public is counting on the Chairman's assurances that the Commission will move quickly to complete its newly initiated proceedings."

When the FCC chooses to make this secret information known, those who contribute to political campaigns will know where the money is going and they will also know how much it will cost for certain political advertisements to be displayed. While funding for political campaigns and advertisements was once private information, that private information will now likely be revealed to the general public. If the disclosure takes place prior to the elections ins 2012, the public will be informed on who is spending large amounts of money on the advertisements.