

and expenditures. One of the many changes embodied in Senate Bill 456 pertains to the length of time for which various reports, statements and accounts filed with certain public boards and officers must be retained by them. Whereas the present law requires that such records be retained for only one year after the date of filing, Senate Bill 456 amends Section 26-14 so as to require that they be preserved for the longer of two years after the election to which the records relate, or one year after the date for filing of the final report or statement as required. Since Senate Bill 456 also amends Section 26-11 so as to require candidates to file annual reports so long as a cash balance exists or any unpaid bills or deficits remain to be paid, it thus would require in such instances that all records filed by a candidate for a given election be maintained indefinitely until one year after the filing of the final report showing no cash balance and no unpaid bills or deficits.

House Bill 603 deals solely with the required retention of records, but in this area it goes beyond Senate Bill 456 in certain respects. The bill amends Section 26-14 so as to require that all reports, statements and accounts relating to campaign contributions and expenditures be maintained by the board (or officer) with which they are required to be filed for "at least one year beyond the length of the term of the public or party office for which every candidate, to whom these reports, statements or accounts apply, has offered himself for nomination or election. . ." In the case of certain judicial candidates, this would require preservation of records for sixteen years. House Bill 603 also requires that the treasurers and sub-treasurers of the various candidates and committees preserve the books and records which they are required to maintain (without regard to whether they must be filed) for "one year beyond the length of the term of the public or party office for which every candidate, to whom these books and records apply, has offered himself for nomination or election. . ." No similar provision extending the time of required maintenance of records by treasurers and sub-treasurers is included in Senate Bill 456.

In addition to the conflicts noted above, there are other differences in the two versions of Section 26-14, but they are relatively insubstantial.

It is our view that the conflict between Senate Bill 456 and House Bill 603 is irreconcilable insofar as they both purport to amend Section 26-14 and that, accordingly, if both bills are signed, the provisions of the bill signed later would prevail in accordance with Article 1, Section 17 of the Annotated Code of Maryland. If both bills are signed and House Bill 603 is signed later, we believe that its amendment of Section 26-14