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DETROIT -- Detroit Mayor Ken Cockrel has touted transparency as his administration's paradigm after outgoing Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice for committing perjury.

Now only one month into his tenure, Cockrel might have committed perjury in filing for next year's special elections.

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In October, Cockrel signed a sworn statement agreeing that he had no unpaid campaign-finance fees, when in fact he had a \$42,000 fine for failing to submit late contribution reports.

A false statement on an affidavit is perjury and punishable by up to five years in prison, a \$1,000 fine or both.

Cockrel said the incident is a mix-up and he thought the matter was cleared up.

"I and my campaign had actually been meeting with the Wayne County clerks office for several months prior to the filing deadline of for filing nominating petitions. The campaign finance reports as amended and corrected in order to clear up any errors or omissions that were previously identified were actually filed," said Cockrel.

Wayne County Clerk Cathy Garrett is seeking legal advice and is forwarding the matter to Wayne County Prosecutor

Kym Worthy, asking her to charge Cockrel with perjury.

"I have to admit that that's somewhat baffling to me because of the fact that we have met with representatives of her office who told us something different," said Cockrel.

Garrett Was not available for comment.

"When you sign your name, you swear to information and you submit it -- especially to a government office. There are possible felony charges for that," said University of Detroit political science professor Victoria Mantzopoulos.

Garrett assessed the fees on Cockrel, seven other members of the City Council and several other Wayne County officials as part of a crackdown on candidates who failed to file late contribution reports, to take into account contributions they received about two weeks before elections.

Former Councilman Nicholas Hood III, another mayoral candidate, signed his sworn statement, even though he owes \$275 and an outstanding report.

According to Michigan election laws, after the candidates file their last campaign finance statements about two weeks before the vote, they are to report any contributions of \$200 or more at least 48 hours before the elections.

"My campaign has worked with the County Clerk's office to resolve the errors and omissions and filed amended reports prior to filing my petition," Cockrel said in a statement.

Cockrel said he has asked the Wayne County clerk to waive a \$42,000 fine for failing to submit late contribution reports.

If the fees are not waived or the fine is not paid, Cockrel will not be able to run for mayor in the special elections.

"All the documents necessary to clear up these past reports have been submitted to the clerk and are in the process of being reviewed," said Cockrel in a statement. "I filed my petition and signed the affidavit in good faith and upon the counsel of the County Clerk's office. I am now waiting for a letter from the Wayne County Clerk confirming that the fees have been waived."

According to city records, Cockrel has accepted late campaign donations from several people who are accused of taking and making bribes.

Local 4 has learned Cockrel accepted campaign donations from Karl Kado, an indicted contractor accused by former city officials of paying bribes and kickbacks. He also accepted donations from John Clark, a former City Council aide who is accused of accepting bribes on tape.

"I take ethics very seriously, whether pertaining to campaign funds or taxpayer dollars. I am committed to providing Detroiters with leadership they can trust and be proud of," said Cockrel in a statement.

Rescue 4 has also learned that in the next few days, a second request will be filed with the clerk's office, requesting that Cockrel be banned from running in the special election because of the fines from previous elections.

Four years ago, Attorney Robert Davis sued the clerk's office to have a candidate removed from the Wayne County ballot for not paying campaign fines.

The decision to pull the candidate was challenged in Circuit Court and then in the Court of Appeals, but the candidate was ultimately allowed to run.

Cockrel may have to go through a similar legal battle in order to run for office.

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