



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION
1102 Q Street • Suite 3050 • Sacramento, CA 95811
(916) 322-5660 • Fax (916) 322-0886

First Quarter Update

Campaign Reporting and Advertising Disclosure

Regulations adopted by the Commission.

The following are regulatory changes approved by the Commission during the past quarter concerning campaign reporting or advertising disclosure. To receive updates for all regulations before the Commission, please sign up for our [mailing list here](#).

None.

Advice Letters

The following are advice letters issued by the Commission's Legal Division during the past quarter concerning questions about campaign reporting or advertising disclosure. To receive the monthly report with all advice letters issued, please sign up for our [mailing list here](#).

Campaign

Amber Maltbie

[A-23-175](#)

Campaign funds raised while a ballot measure committee was candidate controlled must be disbursed pursuant to Regulation 18521.5(d)(1-3) because they were raised for a candidate controlled committee. However, the funds need not be disbursed pursuant to subdivision (d)(3) exclusively as a result of an effective termination when the committee became noncandidate controlled, because Regulation 18521.5(d)(3) is permissive in nature.

Max Kanin

[A-24-018](#)

A candidate for city council may open a legal defense committee to pay for legal fees incurred defending against a writ petition challenging his candidate ballot designation. If the candidate's principal campaign committee already paid these legal expenses, then the legal defense committee may pay these expenses, in exchange for the law firm that defended the candidate refunding his campaign committee. The candidate may terminate the legal defense account and legal defense committee under the local ordinance since Regulation 18530.45(b) permits local jurisdictions to adopt different requirements in this area.

Section 84308

Tony Lopresti

[I-23-177](#)

County's award of a \$1000 "sponsorship" to a non-profit organization is an entitlement for use proceeding under Section 84308. Generally, a county supervisor's ability to accept a contribution greater than \$250 from individuals associated with the non-profit will depend on whether the individual qualifies as a party, participant, agent, or individual whose contributions are required to be aggregated under Section 82015.5.

Tony Lopresti[I-23-178](#)

The mandated periodic review of a development agreement by a city council is a proceeding subject to Section 84308, as it is a substantive review of a contract agreement between the city and the applicant (project proponent) that involves a determination of substantial evidence of good faith compliance and may result in modifying or terminating the agreement.

Tyler Haskell[I-24-008](#)

In a contract proceeding between a local agency and a county, the local agency's employee who makes direct contact with the county is not an "agent" of the party for purposes of Section 84308. Due to the exclusions of government salary and benefits from the definition of "income" under the Act, the local agency employee is not representing the party "for compensation," as required under Regulation 18438.3.

John Bakker[A-24-004](#)

A proceeding affecting parking rules for an entire downtown specific plan area, affecting many and diverse interests, does not qualify as a proceeding involving a license, permit, or other entitlement for use for purposes of Section 84308. Additionally, under Section 84308, the circumstances in which an officer "knows or has reason to know" about a proceeding include where the officer has actual knowledge of the proceeding, which may predate the publication of a meeting agenda relating to the proceeding.

Commission Opinions

None.

Enforcement Matters

The following are summaries of significant enforcement actions approved by the Commission in the past quarter involving violations of the Act's campaign reporting and advertising disclosure provisions. To receive a monthly report of all enforcement actions, please sign up for our [mailing list here](#).

Laundered Campaign Contributions

In the Matter of Alex Villanueva, Villanueva for Los Angeles Sheriff 2018, Cine D. Ivery, and Manuel Gomez; FPPC No. 18/1097. Staff: Neal Bucknell, Senior Commission Counsel and George Aradi, Special Investigator. Alex Villanueva and Alex Villanueva for Los Angeles Sheriff 2018 are represented by Brian Hildreth of Bell, McAndrews & Hiltachk. Cine D. Ivery is represented by Beverly Grossman Palmer of Strumwasser & Woocher, LLP. Manuel Gomez is represented by Kirt J. Hopson. Alex Villanueva for Los Angeles Sheriff 2018 was Villanueva's candidate-controlled committee. Cine D. Ivery served as the Committee's treasurer. In August and September 2018, Gomez made 14 campaign contributions in the names of persons other than themselves to Villanueva for Los Angeles Sheriff 2018, in violation of Government Code Section 84301 (10 counts). The Committee, Villanueva, and Ivery failed to report required occupation and employer information for a contribution received from Gomez, in violation of Government Code Section 84211, subdivision (f) (1 count). Also, they failed to report similar information for a contribution that was reported as received from Gomez's son-in-law and failed

to return the contribution, in violation of Government Code Sections 84211, subdivision (f); 85700; and California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Section 18570 (1 count). **Fine: \$57,500.**

In the Matter of North Star Alliances, LLC, Ernesto Morales, and Lauren Morales-Chitay; FPPC No. 20/77. Staff: Theresa Gilbertson, Senior Commission Counsel and Ann Flaherty, Special Investigator. The respondents are represented by Dmitry Gorin of Eisner and Gorin LLP. Respondents made contributions in the name of another and failed to disclose that they were acting as an intermediary, in violation of Government Code Sections 84301 and 84302 (5 counts). **Fine: \$22,500.**

Cash and In-Kind Contributions

In the Matter of Kern Citizens for Patient Rights, Larry Hiestand, and Jeff Jarvis; FPPC No. 23/819. Staff: Commission Counsel, Marissa Corona and Special Investigator, Kaitlin Osborn. Kern Citizens for Patient Rights was a local general purpose ballot measure committee. Larry Hiestand served as the Committee's treasurer and Jeff Jarvis served as the Committee's principal officer. The Committee, Hiestand and Jarvis failed to timely file two pre-election campaign statements and one semi-annual campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200 and 84200.5 (1 count); and improperly accepted cash contributions of \$100 or more, in violation of Government Code Section 84300 (1 count). **Fine: \$5,000.**

Behested Payments

In the Matter of Michael Tubbs; FPPC No. 18/140. Staff: Theresa Gilbertson, Senior Commission Counsel and Kaitlin Osborn, Special Investigator. Michael Tubbs, in their capacity as Mayor for the City of Stockton, failed to timely file eight behested payment reports, in violation of Government Code Section 84224 (8 counts). **Fine: \$3,800 (Tiers One & Two).**

In the Matter of Christopher Holden; FPPC No. 19/429. Staff: Neal Bucknell, Senior Commission Counsel and Lance Hachigian, Special Investigator. Christopher Holden is represented by Gary Winuk and Stephen Kaufman of the Kaufman Legal Group. Holden failed to timely file Form 803 behested payment reports regarding approximately 94 charitable payments of \$5,000 or more totaling approximately \$1,576,500, in violation of Government Code Section 82015, subdivision (b)(2)(B)(iii), as in effect prior to 2018, and Government Code Section 84224, as in effect after 2017 (16 counts). **Fine: \$24,000.**

Campaign Late Reporter

In the Matter of Dominic Foppoli and Friends of Dominic Foppoli for Windsor Town Council 2018; FPPC No. 21/362. Staff: Neal Bucknell, Senior Commission Counsel and George Aradi, Special Investigator. On campaign statements filed for the reporting periods ending June 30 and September 22, 2018, respondents failed to timely report Schedule E expenditures totaling approximately \$12,849 and \$7,789, respectively, in violation of Government Code Section 84211 (2 counts). **Fine: \$1,405 (Tier Two).**

In the Matter of Village Laguna, Inc., and Mary Ives; FPPC No. 18/1434. Staff: Theresa Gilbertson, Senior Commission Counsel and Roone Petersen, Special Investigator. The respondents are represented by Beverly Grossman Palmer of Strumwasser & Woocher LLP. Village Laguna, Inc., is a city general purpose committee. Mary Ives serves as the Committee's treasurer. Village Laguna, Inc. and Ives failed to report independent expenditures on campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84211, subdivision (k)(5) (5 counts). In

addition, Village Laguna, Inc. and Ives failed to timely file an independent expenditure report, in violation of Government Code Section 84204 (1 count). **Fine: \$1,817 (Tier One).**

Campaign Late Filer

In the Matter of Carla J Neal for Assembly 2018, Carla J. Neal, and Stephen A. Smith; FPPC No. 18/714. Staff: Jenna C. Rinehart, Commission Counsel. Carla J. Neal was a successful candidate for State Assembly, District 5, in the June 5, 2018 Primary Election but was defeated in the November 6, 2018 General Election. Carla J Neal for Assembly 2018 was Neal's candidate-controlled committee. Stephen A. Smith served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee, Neal, and Smith failed to timely file an amendment to its statement of organization to disclose its date of qualification, in violation of Government Code Sections 84101 and 84103 (1 count). Additionally, the Committee, Neal, and Smith failed to timely file two pre-election campaign statements and three 24-hour contribution reports, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200.5 and 84203 (5 counts); and failed to timely file six semi-annual campaign statements electronically and/or in paper format, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200 and 84605 (6 counts). **Fine: \$2,619 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of The Red Brennan Group, and Thomas Murphy; FPPC No. 20/523. Staff: Alex Rose, Senior Commission Counsel and Kaitlin Osborn, Special Investigator. The respondent is represented by Ashlee Titus of Bell, McAndrews & Hiltachk LLP. The Red Brennan Group was a local general purpose committee. Thomas Murphy served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Murphy failed to timely file nine 24-Hour Reports and failed to properly describe reportable activity for two campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Sections 84203 and 84211 (11 counts). **Fine: \$11,219 (Tier Two).**

In the Matter of Louis J. Giraud, and Louis J. Giraud and Affiliated Entities; FPPC 22/315. Staff: Jonathan Rivera, Commission Counsel and Roone Petersen, Special Investigator. The respondents were represented by Rachael Rutkowski of Olson Remcho LLP. Louis J. Giraud, a major donor committee for the calendar years 2018, 2020, and 2022, failed to timely file two major donor committee campaign statements, eleven 24-Hour Reports, and a Statement of Members, in violation of Government Code Sections 84109, 84200(b), and 84203 (14 counts). **Fine: \$5,800 (Tiers One & Two).**

In the Matter of Making Housing Affordable – YES on Prop 10 Committee; FPPC No. 18/820. Staff: Angela J. Brereton, Assistant Chief of Enforcement and Lance Hachigian, Special Investigator. The respondents are represented by Gary Winuk of Kaufman Legal Group. Making Housing Affordable – YES on Prop 10 Committee was a ballot measure committee. The Committee failed to timely file eighteen 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code Section 84203 (18 counts). **Fine: \$4,775 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of Committee to Save Our Neighborhoods; FPPC No. 18/820. Staff: Angela J. Brereton, Assistant Chief of Enforcement and Lance Hachigian, Special Investigator. The respondents are represented by Gary Winuk of Kaufman Legal Group. Committee to Save Our Neighborhoods was a ballot measure committee. The Committee failed to timely file nineteen 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code Section 84203 (19 counts). **Fine: \$ 4,619 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of Irma Lopez for Hartnell College 2015 (ID # 1379428); Irma Lopez for Hartnell Trustee 4 2018/2020 (ID # 1408060); Irma Lopez; Gloria Lockwood; D. Michelle

Rios; and Laura Rodriguez; FPPC No. 18/587. Staff: Alex Rose, Senior Commission Counsel. Irma Lopez was an unsuccessful candidate for the Hartnell Community College District Board of Trustees in the November 3, 2015 General Election, but was a successful candidate for the same position in the November 6, 2018 and November 3, 2020 General Elections. Irma Lopez for Hartnell College 2015 and Irma Lopez for Hartnell Trustee 4 2018/2020 were Lopez's candidate-controlled committees. Gloria Lockwood, D. Michelle Rios, and Laura Rodriguez served as the Committees' treasurers. The Committees, Lopez, Lockwood, Rios, and Rodriguez failed to timely file six semi-annual campaign statements, two pre-election campaign statements, and five 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200, 84200.5, and 84203 (13 counts). **Fine: \$3,690 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of Santa Barbara Rental Property PAC, and Robert Kooyman; FPPC No 19/066. Staff: Theresa Gilbertson, Senior Commission Counsel and Alethea Perez, Special Investigator. The Santa Barbara Rental Property PAC is an active general-purpose committee. Robert Kooyman serves as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Kooyman failed to timely file two pre-election campaign statements and one semi-annual campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200.5 and 84200 (3 counts). In addition, the Committee and Kooyman failed to timely file three 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code Section 84203 (3 counts). **Fine: \$2,102 (Tiers One & Two).**

In the Matter of Dan Feder; FPPC No. 23/793. Staff: Alex Rose, Senior Commission Counsel and George Aradi, Special Investigator. The respondent is represented by Ashlee Titus of Bell, McAndrews & Hiltachk LLP. Dan Feder, a major donor committee for the calendar years 2020 through 2023, failed to timely file four semi-annual campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84200(b) (4 counts). **Fine: \$2,000 (Tiers One & Two).**

In the Matter of Gutierrez for City Council 2020, and Jose Gutierrez; FPPC No. 22/462. Staff: Jaleena Evans, Commission Counsel. Jose Gutierrez was an unsuccessful candidate for Fresno City Council in the November 3, 2020 General Election. Gutierrez for City Council 2020 was Gutierrez's candidate-controlled committee. Jose Gutierrez served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Gutierrez failed to timely report the employer and occupation information for contributions received on the first pre-election campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Section 84211 (1 count). Additionally, the Committee and Gutierrez failed to timely file a second pre-election campaign statement and two 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200.5 (1 count) and 84203 (2 counts). **Fine: \$978 (Tiers One & Two).**

In the Matter of Michael Vasilas; FPPC No. 20/910. Staff: Marissa Corona, Commission Counsel and Jay Gehres, Special Investigator. Michael Vasilas qualified as an independent expenditure committee opposing a City of Richmond measure, Measure U, in the November 3, 2020 General Election. Vasilas failed to timely file an independent expenditure campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Section 84200, subdivision (b) (1 count) and failed to timely file an independent expenditure 24-Hour Report, in violation of Government Code Section 84204 (1 count). **Fine: \$662 (Tiers One & Two).**

In the Matter of Kenny Session for City Council District 6 2022, Kenny Session, and Kandis Session; FPPC No. 23/349. Staff: Chance Felkins, Commission Counsel. Kenny Session was an unsuccessful candidate for Oakland City Council in the November 8, 2022 General Election. Kenny Session for City Council District 6 2022 was their candidate-controlled

committee. Kandis Session served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee, Kenny Session, and Kandis Session failed to timely file a semi-annual campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Section 84200 (1 count). **Fine: \$278 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of Ramona Landeros; FPPC No. 20/779. Staff: Marissa Corona, Commission Counsel. Ramona Landeros, a Board of Trustees Member of the Twin Rivers Unified School District, failed to timely file an Officeholder Campaign Statement Short Form (Form 470) for 2020, in violation of Government Code Section 84206 (1 count). **Fine: \$200 (Tier One).**

[Campaign Bank Account](#)

In the Matter of Mike Leahy for Supervisor 2020, and Mike Leahy; FPPC No. 20/380. Staff: Alex Rose, Senior Commission Counsel and Ann Flaherty, Special Investigator. Mike Leahy was an unsuccessful candidate for Yuba County Supervisor in the March 3, 2020 Primary Election. Mike Leahy for Supervisor 2020 was Leahy's candidate-controlled committee. Leahy served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Leahy failed to process \$1,095 through the campaign bank account over two campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 85201 (2 counts). **Fine: \$811 (Tier Two).**

In the Matter of Committee to Re-Elect Larry Spicer to Monrovia City Council 2022, Larry Spicer, and Bobby Williams; FPPC No. 23/750. Staff: Alex Rose, Senior Commission Counsel and Lance Hachigian, Special Investigator. Larry Spicer was a successful candidate for Monrovia City Council in the November 8, 2022 General Election. Committee to Re-Elect Larry Spicer to Monrovia City Council 2022 was Spicer's candidate-controlled committee. Bobby Williams served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee, Spicer, and Williams failed to timely disclose expenditures on a semi-annual campaign statement and failed to process \$768 through the campaign bank account over three campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Sections 84211 and 85201 (4 counts). **Fine: \$553 (Tier One).**

[Advertisements](#)

In the Matter of Mountain View Professional Firefighters Political Action Committee and Melton Wong; FPPC No. 20/921. Staff: Jenna C. Rinehart, Commission Counsel and Jay Gehres, Special Investigator. The respondents were represented by Richard Rios and Rachael Rutkowski of Olson Remcho LLP. Mountain View Professional Firefighters Political Action Committee is a city general purpose committee who was active in the City of Mountain View prior to the November 3, 2020 General Election. Melton Wong served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Wong failed to include the Committee's full name and the "not authorized" language on four mailer advertisements, in violation of Government Code Sections 84502 and 84506.5 (4 counts). Additionally, the Committee and Wong failed to timely file an amendment to its statement of organization to disclose its change in jurisdiction from state to city, in violation of Government Code Section 84103 (1 count). Finally, the Committee failed to timely disclose certain expenditures on a pre-election campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Section 84211 (1 count). **Fine: \$3,770 (Tier Two).**

In the Matter of Dunsmuir Association of Ratepayers & Taxpayers (DART) and Leslie Wilde; FPPC No. 23/798. Staff: Alex Rose, Commission Counsel and Roone Peterson, Special Investigator. DART was a local primarily formed committee in support of Ahmet Tasci, Dena Marlatt, and Sandra Vaughan for Dunsmuir City Council and Treasurer in the November 3, 2020 General Election. Wilde served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Wilde failed to

timely file a pre-election campaign statement and a semi-annual campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200.5 and 84200 (2 counts). Furthermore, the Committee and Wilde failed to include proper advertising and mailing disclosures, in violation of Government Code Section 84502 (2 counts). Finally, the Committee and Wilde failed to include the names of the candidates the Committee was primarily formed to support, in violation of Government Code Section 84102 (1 count). **Fine: \$1,701 (Tiers One & Two).**

In the Matter of Paul Courtney; FPPC No. 22/764. Staff: Alex Rose, Commission Counsel and George Aradi, Special Investigator. Paul Courtney is a local Independent Expenditure Committee. The Committee failed to timely file a 24-hour report and an independent expenditure campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Sections 84204 and 84200 (2 counts). Furthermore, the Committee failed to include the “Ad paid for by” and “Not authorized” disclaimers on advertisements, in violation of Government Code Sections 84502 and 84506.5 (2 counts). **Fine: \$1,506 (Tier Two).**

In the Matter of Committee to Elect Ahmet Tasci to the City Council 2020 and Ahmet Tasci; FPPC No. 20/967. Staff: Alex Rose, Commission Counsel and Roone Peterson, Special Investigator. Ahmet Tasci was an unsuccessful candidate for Dunsmuir City Council in the November 3, 2020 General Election. Committee to Elect Ahmet Tasci to the City Council 2020 was a Tasci’s candidate-controlled committee and they served as the Committee’s treasurer. The Committee and Tasci failed to timely file two pre-election campaign statements, a semi-annual campaign statement, and a 24-hour report, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200.5, 84200, and 84203 (4 counts). Additionally, the Committee and Tasci failed to include the proper advertising and mailing disclosures, in violation of Government Code Sections 84502 and 84506.5 (1 count). **Fine: \$1,458 (Tiers One & Two).**

In the Matter of One Temecula Valley PAC and David Matics; FPPC No. 23/815. Staff: James M. Lindsay, Chief of Enforcement and Laura Mandler, Political Reform Consultant. One Temecula Valley PAC is a local general purpose committee. David Matics served as the Committee’s treasurer. The Committee and Matics failed to include the proper advertising disclosures on two types of campaign signs, in violation of Government Code Section 84502 (2 counts). **Fine: \$806 (Tier Two).**

In the Matter of Athena Medical Group; FPPC No. 18/1397. Staff: Artin Berjikly, Senior Commission Counsel and Lance Hachigian, Special Investigator. Athena Medical Group is an independent expenditure committee. Dr. William Khieu served as the Committee’s treasurer and principal officer. The Committee and Khieu failed to include the proper advertising disclosures and disclaimers on a newspaper advertisement and yard signs distributed prior to the November 6, 2018, General Election, in violation of Government Code Sections 84502 and 84506.5 (4 counts). **Fine: \$428 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of CA Political Rebuild Team, Orrin Heatlie; FPPC No. 20/665. Staff: Alex Rose, Commission Counsel and Jay Gehres, Special Investigator. CA Political Rebuild Team is a state general purpose committee. Orrin Heatlie served as the Committee’s principal officer and treasurer. The Committee and Heatlie failed to include the proper advertising disclosure on a billboard advertisement purchased prior to the September 14, 2021 election, in violation of Government Code Section 84504.2 (1 count). **Fine: \$112 (Tier One).**

Legislation

SB 1027 (Menjivar) – Redaction of Bank Account Information on Statements of Organization

Status: Referred to the Senate Elections Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee on 2/14/24

Short Summary: SB 1027 would require the Secretary of State to redact the bank account number and the names of persons authorized to obtain bank account records from a committee’s Statement of Organization before providing the statement to the public. The bill would also authorize a committee to omit that same information from the copy of the statement filed with the local filing officer.

Detailed Summary:

Existing law: Existing law provides that a person or group of persons that receives \$2,000 or more in contributions in a calendar year is a “committee” under the Act. These types of committees, referred to as recipient committees, must file a Statement of Organization with the SOS and a copy of the statement with the local filing officer, if any, within 10 days of qualifying as a recipient committee. The Statement of Organization includes, among other things, disclosure of the committee’s bank account number and the names of persons authorized to obtain committee bank account records.

Fraud risk: Committees and committee representatives have expressed concern that public disclosure of the committee bank account number and the names of the listed persons makes the committee vulnerable to financial fraud.

Redaction of bank account information: The bill would require the Secretary of State to redact the bank account number and, subject to a delayed operative date, the names of persons authorized to obtain bank account records from a committee’s Statement of Organization before providing the statement to the public. The bill would also authorize a committee to omit that same information from the copy of the Statement of Organization filed with the local filing officer.

Delayed operative date: Due to limitations within the existing Cal-Access campaign reporting system, additional fields cannot be redacted on Cal-Access. Because of this limitation, redaction of the names of persons authorized to obtain bank account records would take effect only after the Cal-Access Replacement System is operational.

SB 1151 (Hurtado) - Registration and reporting requirements for foreign agents

Status: Referred to the Senate Elections Committee on 2/21/24

Short Summary: SB 1151 would make the agent of a foreign principal subject to the same registration and reporting requirements as lobbyists and lobbying firms under the PRA, and certain additional requirements.

Detailed Summary:

Existing law: Existing law under the PRA’s lobbying provisions requires an individual or entity that receives compensation for the purpose of influencing legislative or administrative action to register with, and submit periodic reports to, the Secretary of State. The PRA’s lobbying disclosure provisions generally require lobbyists, lobbying firms, and lobbyist employers to provide basic identifying information, such as their name, telephone number, business address, and more detailed information, such as a description of the “business activity” in which the lobbyist or their employer is engaged.

Registration and reporting requirements: The bill would require an individual who engages in certain specified activities related to influencing legislative or administrative action at the order, request, or under the direction or control of a foreign principal to register as an agent of a foreign principal and to file periodic reports with the Secretary of State. Registration and reporting would be in the same manner, with the same frequency, and with the same content as for lobbyists and lobbying firms.

Additional requirement: The bill would additionally require a foreign agent to disclose on their registration statement any compensation received, contracted, or otherwise promised to the agent by each foreign principal.

Training and fee: The bill would also subject foreign agents to the same ethics training requirements and the same annual fee as lobbyists.

Commissioner restriction: The bill would prohibit a foreign agent from being a Commissioner with the FPPC.

SB 1170 (Menjivar) - Use of campaign funds for mental health expenses

Status: Referred to the Senate Elections Committee

Short Summary: SB 1170 would authorize expenditure of campaign funds for mental healthcare expenses for non-incumbent candidates under limited circumstances.

Detailed Summary:

Existing law: Existing law prohibits expenditure of campaign funds for health-related expenses for a candidate, elected officer, or any individual or individuals with authority to approve the expenditure of campaign funds held by a committee, or members of their households.

Authorizing campaign funds use for mental healthcare expenses: The bill would authorize campaign funds to be used to pay or reimburse a non-incumbent candidate for reasonable and necessary mental healthcare expenses to address mental health issues that have arisen during the campaign or have been adversely impacted by campaign activities if the candidate does not have health insurance or has been denied coverage for these mental healthcare expenses by their health insurance.

Limited time period: Expenditures for mental healthcare expenses would be permitted from the date upon which a candidate committee is established to the date that the election results are certified.

Reporting: The bill would require these expenditures to be reported on campaign statements and would require the disclosures to note the underlying campaign-related circumstances or events that gave rise to the need for mental health expenses.

Mental healthcare expenses defined: Under the bill, “mental healthcare expenses” refers to expenses for services including therapy, psychological, or psychiatric counseling services, provided in a group or private setting, either virtually or in person, by a professional licensed by the California Board of Behavioral Sciences, or an associate accruing the house for such a license, to address mental health issues.

AB 3239 (Carrillo) – Use of Campaign Funds: Emotional Support Animal Airline Travel

Status: Amended 3/21/24; set for hearing in the Assembly Elections Committee on 4/24/24

Short Summary: AB 3239 would authorize campaign funds to be used pay or reimburse airline travel expenses related to an emotional support animal under certain circumstances.

Detailed Summary:

Existing law: Under existing law, an expenditure of campaign funds that confers a substantial personal benefit must be directly related to a political, legislative, or governmental purpose of the committee. Existing law prohibits campaign funds from being used to pay or reimburse travel expenses except when these expenditures are directly related to a political, legislative, or governmental purpose.

Exception for emotional support animal airline travel costs: The bill would allow campaign funds to be used to pay or reimburse airline travel expenses related to an emotional support animal belonging to and traveling with an individual whose airline travel may be paid for or reimbursed by campaign funds.

Definition of emotional support animal: The bill would cross-reference the definition of “emotional support animal” elsewhere in state law, which defines the term to mean “an animal that provides emotional, cognitive, or other similar support to an individual with a disability, and that does not need to be trained or certified.”

Reporting: The bill would require these costs to be reported on campaign statements the same as other travel costs, and would provide that the payments or reimbursement are considered for the same purpose as the candidate’s or elected officer’s travel.