

Date of Hearing: April 15, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1560 (Tangipa) – As Introduced January 8, 2026

Policy Committee: Elections Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill prohibits a person convicted of a crime of public corruption from acting as a lobbyist.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Explicitly states that a person who is convicted of a crime of public corruption, as described in existing state law, shall not thereafter act as a lobbyist in California and declares void the lobbyist certification (referred to in the bill as the “lobbying certification”) of a person who is already a registered lobbyist upon that person’s convictions of a crime of public corruption.
- 2) Bars the Secretary of State (SOS) from accepting a lobbyist certification from a person who has been convicted of a crime of public corruption.
- 3) Requires a lobbyist certification to include a statement that the lobbyist has not been convicted of a crime of public corruption.

FISCAL EFFECT:

The SOS anticipates one-time costs in the mid thousands of dollars (General Fund) associated with software modifications, and no ongoing costs.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** The author notes that state law prohibits a person convicted of certain crimes generally characterized as “public corruption” from running for public office; yet the law does not prohibit such a person from lobbying public officials. According to the author, this is a problem because “Lobbyists play a direct role in shaping legislation, budgets, and regulatory decisions. Allowing individuals convicted of public corruption to participate in that process undermines public trust and creates a double standard in California law.”
- 2) **Background.** In 1974, California voters approved Proposition 9, thereby enacting the Political Reform Act (PRA). The act made several findings and declarations, among them:
 - Public officials, whether elected or appointed, should perform their duties in an impartial manner, free from bias caused by their own financial interests or the financial interests of persons who have supported them.

- The influence of large campaign contributors is increased because existing laws for disclosure of campaign receipts and expenditures have proved to be inadequate.
- The wealthy individuals and organizations which make large campaign contributions frequently extend their influence by employing lobbyists and spending large amounts to influence legislative and administrative actions.
- Previous laws regulating political practices have suffered from inadequate enforcement by state and local authorities.

Accordingly, the PRA instituted legal requirements for reporting campaign expenditures and contributions, the financial interests of public officials and the activities and financing of lobbyists, which the PRA defines as:

Any individual who receives two thousand dollars (\$2,000) or more in economic consideration in a calendar month, other than reimbursement for reasonable travel expenses, or whose principal duties as an employee are, to communicate directly or through that individual's agents with any elective state official, agency official, or legislative official for the purpose of influencing legislative or administrative action.

In addition, the PRA created the Fair Political Practices Committee (FPPC)—a five-member body of Governor's appointees—and charged it with enforcing the act.

The PRA makes several requirements specific to lobbyists. For example, the PRA requires each lobbying firm, lobbyist employer and lobbying coalition that employs at least one in-house lobbyist to register with the SOS. The act further requires each lobbyist to submit to the SOS a lobbyist certification, which is to include, among other things, a statement that the lobbyist has read and understands certain legal requirements—including limitations on lobbyists making gifts of value to any person and prohibitions against placing obligations on or deceiving public officials—and the need to attend orientation courses presented by legislative ethics committees on the relevant statutes and regulations governing official conduct. Statute authorizes the SOS to charge each lobbyist and each lobbyist employer a yearly fee of \$50 for each lobbyist required to be listed on its registration statement, the proceeds of which are to be split evenly between the Political Disclosure, Accountability, Transparency and Access Fund (which funds the work of the FPPC) and the state General Fund. In addition, statute authorizes the legislative ethics committees to charge a fee on lobbyists for attending the orientation course.

Both statute and the California Constitution prohibit a person convicted of certain crimes of public corruption from holding public office. For example, the constitution disqualifies from public office any person who has been convicted of having given or offered a bribe to procure personal election or appointment. Similarly, statute bars a person from consideration as a candidate for any state or local elective office if the person has been convicted of a felony involving accepting or giving, or offering to give, any bribe, the embezzlement of public money, extortion or theft of public money, perjury, or conspiracy to commit any of those crimes. Neither the state constitution nor statute provide equivalent limitations on the ability of a lobbyist convicted of crimes of public corruption from holding public office.

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