

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 1789 (Boerner)
As Amended May 18, 2026
2/3 vote

SUMMARY

Requires candidates and committee treasurers to take training classes related to their obligations under the Political Reform Act (PRA), beginning in 2029.

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires a candidate for elective office, beginning in 2029, to complete a training course on the PRA's requirements for campaigns for that office.
 - a) Requires the candidate to complete the training no later than 30 days after the candidate files a statement of intention (SOI) to be a candidate. Requires an individual who filed a SOI before January 1, 2029, to complete the course by February 28, 2029.
 - b) Prohibits a candidate's own controlled committee from accepting a campaign contribution if the candidate has not completed the training by the deadline, until such time that the candidate completes the training.
- 2) Requires the campaign treasurer for a candidate-controlled committee, beginning in 2029, to complete a training course on the PRA's requirements that apply to the committee.
 - a) Requires the treasurer to complete the training within 30 days of the date that the committee submits its registration, if the treasurer has not completed the training in the last four years. Requires a treasurer of a committee that registers before January 1, 2029, to complete the course by February 28, 2029, if the committee has not terminated by that date.
 - b) Prohibits a committee from accepting a campaign contribution if the committee's treasurer has not completed the training by the deadline, until such time that the treasurer completes the training.
- 3) Requires the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) to develop, maintain, and offer the required training courses. Requires the courses to be available on demand, and prohibits the courses from exceeding 90 minutes in length for candidates or 120 minutes in length for treasurers.
- 4) Provides that the training requirements do not apply to either of the following:
 - a) An individual who completed similar training required by a local government ethics agency, as specified. Gives the FPPC discretion to determine whether another training is similar to the FPPC's training.
 - b) A candidate who indicates that they do not intend to receive sufficient campaign contributions to qualify as a campaign committee, as specified.

COMMENTS

Although existing law does not require candidates or committee treasurers to complete any training, the FPPC has prepared many informational and educational resources, including campaign manuals, fact sheets, and online webinars, to help educate the regulated community about their obligations under the PRA. Among other online videos, the FPPC's YouTube channel includes a Tutorial for Candidates and Treasurers that is approximately 34 minutes long and has been available since late 2018. According to the YouTube page for that video, it has been viewed approximately 11,500 times. The FPPC's YouTube channel also includes a 32-minute long training video for campaign filing officers that has been viewed approximately 3,000 times since being uploaded in 2016.

While the use of these publicly-available resources seems to suggest that the FPPC's training resources have been well received, the total number of views on these videos represents a small fraction of the number of candidates for public office that have appeared on the ballot in California over that time. Requiring candidates and committee treasurers to complete training could considerably expand awareness of the FPPC's informational materials and of those individuals' obligations under the PRA.

According to information provided by the author and sponsor of the bill, over the last three years, the FPPC has prosecuted approximately 90 cases involving campaign violations by candidate-controlled committees (not including cases resolved without fines or penalties). The author argues that because candidates are the most visible actors in the electoral process, campaign violations by candidates are particularly harmful to public trust, even when those violations are unintentional. Requiring candidates and treasurers to complete training about their obligations under the PRA may help reduce the number of violations caused by lack of knowledge or understanding of relevant legal requirements.

California voters passed an initiative, Proposition 9, in 1974 that created the FPPC and codified significant restrictions and prohibitions on candidates, officeholders, and lobbyists. That initiative is commonly known as the PRA. Amendments to the PRA that are not submitted to the voters, such as those contained in this bill, must further the purposes of the initiative and require a two-thirds vote of both houses of the Legislature.

According to the Author

"Government transparency is important to maintain the public's trust. AB 1789 would require candidates and treasurers to take a training course with the California Fair Political Practices Commission to ensure that they understand and are prepared to comply with the Political Reform Act."

Arguments in Support

The sponsor of this bill, the FPPC, wrote in support of a prior version of the bill, "AB 1789 would, starting January 1, 2029, require candidates and treasurers to complete a training course on their duties under the PRA, subject to specific deadlines. The consequences for failure to complete the training are designed to compel timely compliance, to ensure that candidates and treasurers receive this training when it is most pertinent and beneficial. Devoting time to education will not only assist candidates but also improve compliance and timely transparency."

Arguments in Opposition

None received that are relevant to the current version of the bill.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, costs of approximately \$325,000 in the first year and \$311,000 annually thereafter to the FPPC for two additional positions to develop the new training courses and provide enforcement for non-compliance by candidates and treasurers (General Fund (GF)). Additionally, costs of approximately \$80,000 annually to the FPPC for a software license for the training programs (GF).

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of GF structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

VOTES**ASM ELECTIONS: 8-0-0**

YES: Pellerin, Gallagher, Bennett, Berman, Elhawary, Johnson, Solache, Stefani

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

YES: Wicks, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

ABS, ABST OR NV: Hoover, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

VERSION: May 18, 2026

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FN: 0002927