
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON
ELECTIONS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**
Senator Scott Wiener, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 1789 **Hearing Date:** 6/16/26
Author: Boerner
Version: 6/8/26 Amended
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Carrie Cornwell

Subject: Political Reform Act of 1974: candidate trainings.

DIGEST

This bill requires candidates and campaign treasurers beginning in 2029 to take a training course on the requirements of the Political Reform Act (PRA) provided by the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC).

ANALYSIS

Existing law contained in the PRA:

- 1) Deems someone a candidate when:
 - a) The person is listed on the ballot or qualified as a write in for nomination or election to any elective office; or
 - b) The person receives a contribution, makes an expenditure, or allows someone else to do that for them to bring about their nomination or election to elective office.
- 2) Defines a “committee” as a person or persons who in a calendar year receives \$2,000 or more; makes independent expenditures of \$1,000 or more; or makes specified payments of \$10,000 or more. Within 10 days of becoming a committee, the committee shall register with the Secretary of State (SOS), who shares the registration with the relevant local filing officer.
- 3) Requires every committee that receives campaign contributions to have a treasurer, who shall authorize all expenditures the committee makes. If a committee does not have a treasurer, it may not receive contributions.
- 4) Requires candidates for elective office and committees formed to support or oppose candidates for public office, among others, to file periodic and activity-based campaign reports disclosing contributions, expenditures, and other related matters.

This bill:

- 1) Requires, starting in 2029, a candidate with a candidate controlled committee to complete a training course on the requirements of the PRA for campaigns for the office for which they are running. The bill further:
 - a) Requires a candidate to complete this training within 30 days of registering with the SOS, unless they have previously received the training for the same office. The bill provides a longer period of two months for those who must take the training because they registered before the training requirement takes effect on January 1, 2029.
 - b) Penalizes candidates who do not complete the training by making their campaign committees ineligible to receive campaign contributions until the candidate completes the training.
- 2) Requires, starting in 2029, a treasurer for a candidate controlled committee to complete a training course on the requirements of the PRA that apply to that committee. The bill further:
 - a) Requires a treasurer to complete this training within 30 days of the committee filing its registration, unless the treasurer has received the training in the previous four years. The bill provides a longer period of two months for those who must take the training because they registered before the training requirement takes effect on January 1, 2029.
 - b) Penalizes a committee whose treasurer does not complete the training by making the committee ineligible to receive campaign contributions until the treasurer completes the training.
- 3) Directs the FPPC to develop, maintain, and offer the training courses, which shall be available via an online platform, the internet, or an application. The candidate training may not exceed 90 minutes, and the treasurer training may not exceed two hours.
- 4) Exempts from the requirements of the bill anyone who has had to take a similar local government training, as determined by the FPPC.

BACKGROUND

Proposition 9, which appeared on the June 1974 ballot, created the PRA and established California's campaign finance and disclosure laws for state and local campaigns, candidates, officeholders, and ballot measures. Proposition 9 also created the FPPC to implement, administer, and enforce the PRA.

The PRA requires candidates for elective office, committees formed to support or oppose candidates for public office or ballot measures, slate mailer organizations, and other specified entities, to file periodic and activity-based campaign statements and reports disclosing contributions, expenditures, and other related matters.

Violations of the PRA generally are subject to administrative, civil, and criminal penalties. Civil and criminal enforcement actions are rare, however, and enforcement actions for violations of the PRA typically are brought through the FPPC’s administrative enforcement process.

COMMENTS

- 1) Author’s Statement. Government transparency is important to maintain the public’s trust. This bill would require candidates and treasurers to take a training course with the FPPC to ensure that they understand and are prepared to comply with the PRA.
- 2) Arguments in Support. The FPPC, the bill’s sponsor, noting the bill’s requirement for candidates and treasurers to complete a training course on their duties under the PRA, writes in support:

The [PRA] includes requirements and restrictions that govern the conduct of campaigns in the state. Many of these provisions are triggered quickly upon becoming a candidate and raising funds, including rules on initial paperwork and registration, opening a campaign bank account, contribution limits and restrictions, permissible expenditures, reporting, and others. It is of great importance that candidates and treasurers are aware of their duties under the PRA and all associated deadlines.

Common Cause explains the bill “represents a practical and balanced approach to improving compliance with California’s campaign finance laws while maintaining strong transparency protections. By preserving disclosure requirements and strengthening education and training, the bill advances the PRA’s core goals of transparency, accountability, and public trust.”

RELATED/PRIOR LEGISLATION

AB 2592 (Pacheco), also on today’s agenda, directs the FPPC, rather than the Legislature’s ethics committees, to provide training required of lobbyists.

PRIOR ACTION

Assembly Floor:	78 - 0
Assembly Appropriations Committee:	11 - 0
Assembly Elections Committee:	8 - 0

POSITIONS

Sponsor: California Fair Political Practices Commission

Support: California Common Cause

Oppose: None received