

Date of Hearing: April 15, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS
Gail Pellerin, Chair
AB 2255 (Pellerin) – As Amended April 7, 2026

SUBJECT: Political Reform Act of 1974: candidate controlled committees: campaign statements.

SUMMARY: Requires candidates to provide additional details about large campaign expenditures made to a single person during times when the candidate is not appearing on the ballot. Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Requires a campaign disclosure report for a candidate's controlled committee for election to office to report additional information about an expenditure if the candidate will not appear on the ballot at the next election, and if the committee makes expenditures to a single person aggregating \$20,000 or more during the period covered by the statement.
- 2) Requires, in situations where a campaign is required to provide additional information about an expenditure pursuant to 1) above, that it include the following information on its campaign disclosure report:
 - a) The name and address of the person who was the recipient of the expenditure(s) exceeding \$20,000.
 - b) The amount of each expenditure to that person during the period covered by the report.
 - c) A description of any consideration for which each such expenditure was made.
 - d) The relationship of the person or reportable subvendor, if any, to the candidate or any individual with authority to approve the expenditure of campaign funds held by the committee.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Creates the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), and makes it responsible for the impartial, effective administration and implementation of the Political Reform Act (PRA). (Government Code §§83100, 83111)
- 2) Requires candidates and campaign committees to file periodic campaign statements disclosing specific information including the name and street address of each person who received an expenditure by the candidate or committee of \$100 or more during the period covered, along with the date and amount of each expenditure, and a brief description of the consideration for which the expenditure was made. (Government Code §84211(k))
- 3) Makes violations of the PRA subject to administrative, civil, and criminal penalties. (Government Code §§83116, 91000-91005.5)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. State-mandated local program; contains a crimes and infractions disclaimer.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose of the Bill:** According to the author:

While candidates may begin fundraising well in advance of an election to ensure they have sufficient resources to communicate with voters, most campaign spending by candidates usually occurs during the weeks leading up to the election. Large campaign expenditures made outside the typical campaign window warrant closer scrutiny to ensure compliance with state law. AB 2255 requires additional detail about the purpose of large campaign expenditures made at times when a candidate is less likely to be engaged in significant campaign activity. This additional disclosure will improve transparency and ensure appropriate oversight of the state's campaign finance laws.

2) **Expenditure Disclosure:** When disclosing a campaign expenditure of \$100 or more on a campaign statement, the PRA requires that the committee disclose the name of the person who received the expenditure, the person's street address, the date and amount of the expenditure, and a brief description of the consideration for which the expenditure was made. Campaign committees typically fulfill the requirement to provide a "brief description of the consideration for which the expenditure was made" by using one of 27 expenditure codes established by the FPPC, which describe common campaign expenses. If none of these codes accurately describe a payment, committees provide their own brief description of the goods or services purchased.

For certain types of expenditures, FPPC regulations require additional information to be supplied. For instance, when a committee pays a person to provide favorable or unfavorable content about a candidate or ballot measure on a website other than the committee's own website, the committee is required to report the name and public username or handle of the person providing content, the name of each website for which the communication is published and, in the case of an article, op-ed, blog post, or similar communication, the title of the communication. When reporting an expenditure for a gift, the committee must provide additional information about the political, legislative, or governmental purpose of the expenditure, along with information about the identities of the gift recipient(s). For these types of expenditures, the additional required disclosure helps ensure adequate transparency and oversight of campaign spending for which there may be a greater interest in public scrutiny.

3) **Campaign Committees for Future Elections:** The provisions of this bill apply only to a situation where a candidate-controlled committee established for an elective office is making expenditures to a single recipient of \$20,000 or more in the reporting period and where the candidate will not appear on the ballot for the next election. This requirement should affect relatively few campaign committees, as the vast majority of candidate controlled committees open at any given time are for the next term of the office for which the committee was formed, and candidates tend to make the bulk of their campaign expenditures during the year of the election.

In some instances, however, candidates do form committees well in advance of the election at which they plan to run. Cal-Access, the state's online campaign finance disclosure database, currently shows at least 30 candidate-controlled committees for elective state office for an election that is *not* the next election for that office (i.e., an election in 2028 or later for the Assembly, or an election in 2030 or later for state Senate, Board of Equalization, or statewide office).

4) **Arguments in Support:** The sponsor of this bill, the FPPC, writes in support:

AB 2255 would require a candidate controlled committee established for an elective office for the controlling candidate to report additional information on its campaign statement if (1) the candidate will not appear on the ballot at the next election, and (2) the committee makes payments to a single recipient of \$20,000 or more during the reporting period.

Under AB 2255, a committee would be required to disclose a description of the consideration provided by a recipient of payments over the threshold amount, and, if applicable, the relationship of the recipient or reportable subvendor to the candidate or any individual with authority to approve the payments.

We expect that the additional information disclosed will show that the vast majority of officials are following the law. By providing the public with the information necessary to confirm that fact, and, more importantly, identify any bad actors, we believe this measure will help strengthen public trust in the integrity of the political process.

5) **Political Reform Act of 1974:** 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.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Fair Political Practices Commission (Sponsor)
League of Women Voters of California

Opposition

None on file.

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