
CONSENT

Bill No: AB 2413
Author: Ransom (D)
Amended: 6/24/26 in Senate
Vote: 27

SENATE ELECTIONS & C.A. COMMITTEE: 5-0, 6/30/26

AYES: Wiener, Choi, Allen, Cervantes, Umberg

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 71-0, 5/11/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Large-format public advertisements: public expense

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill prohibits “large-format public advertisements” from being published or displayed at public expense.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Prohibits newsletters or other mass mailings from being sent at public expense.
- 2) Defines a mass mailing as over 200 substantially similar pieces of mail, excluding responses to unsolicited inquiries or letters.
- 3) Provides some exceptions to the prohibition on mass mailings, including legally required notices, items sent to pay or collect funds, and informational items where an elected official’s name appears only in the letterhead of the mailing.

This bill:

- 1) Defines a “large-format public advertisement” as:

- a) A billboard;
 - b) A wrap on a public transportation vehicle;
 - c) An advertisement affixed to a bus stop or other public infrastructure; or
 - d) Other public advertisements that are 24 inches by 36 inches or more in size and are so designated by regulation.
- 2) Prohibits a large-format public advertisement from being published or displayed at public expense if:
- a) It includes the photograph of an elected officer affiliated with the agency that produces or purchases the advertisement; and
 - b) Public money paid for either the distribution or the design, production, and printing of the advertisement.
- 3) Defines “elected officer affiliated with the agency,” for purposes of the bill, to mean an elected officer who is a member, officer, or employee of the agency or who has supervisory control over the agency or appoints one or members of the agency.
- 4) Deems the agency and the elected officer jointly and severally liable for a violation that occurs when a large-format public advertisement is prepared in cooperation, consultation, coordination, or concert with the elected officer.

Background

Proposition 9, which appeared on the June 1974 ballot, created the Political Reform Act (PRA) and established California’s campaign finance and disclosure laws for state and local campaigns, candidates, officeholders, and ballot measures.

In 1988, Proposition 73 amended the PRA in several ways, including prohibiting the use of public money for campaign purposes. Among its provisions, Proposition 73 prohibits mass mailings by public officials. SB 45 (Mendoza, Chapter 827, Statutes of 2017) codified a Fair Political Practices Commission regulation regarding mass mailings sent at public expense, prohibiting these mass mailings from being sent within the 60 days preceding an election by or on behalf of a state or local candidate whose name will appear on the ballot.

Comments

- 1) *Author's Statement.* California is a leader in providing strong protection to ensure fair elections that prohibit public dollars from being used for political advertising. Unfortunately, current law does not extend these protections to situations where publicly funded billboards prominently display elected officials' images. This bill would close this gap in current law by prohibiting public funds from being used to feature elected officials' images on costly billboards. In doing so, this bill would further protect the public's trust in responsible government spending.
- 2) *Examples of Large-Format Public Ads.* The author cites two main examples that warrant the need for this bill. The first is the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's billboard campaign, which included large photos of locally elected board members. Generally, the billboards are part of a public awareness and educational campaign to reach San Joaquin Valley residents, generate public interest in and support of air quality improvement projects, and effect meaningful changes in public behavior. The author argues public education campaigns are important and an appropriate use of public funds, but they become a problem when elected officials are being featured in a manner that could be seen as political advertising.

The second example is physical and digital billboards along freeways and other major thoroughfares in Sacramento County that include a photograph of Sacramento County Sheriff Jim Cooper. Media articles state these billboards are part of a public awareness campaign to address retail theft and the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office has purchased approximately 20 billboards across the county to advertise efforts to stop theft from retail stores with many featuring the elected sheriff himself.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/3/26)

California Fair Political Practices Commission

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/3/26)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 71-0, 5/11/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Ramos, Ransom, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Gallagher, Lee, Lowenthal, Quirk-Silva, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Solache, Soria

Prepared by: Carrie Cornwell / E. & C.A. / (916) 651-4106

8/5/26 15:04:44

**** END ****