

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 2413 (Ransom)

As Amended June 24, 2026

2/3 vote

SUMMARY

Prohibits certain large-format public advertisements from being published or displayed using public money if the advertisement features a photograph of an elected official affiliated with the agency that paid for the ad.

Senate Amendments

Make an agency and elected official jointly and severally liable for any administrative or civil penalties incurred if the agency prepares a large-format public advertisement that features a photograph of elected official affiliated with the agency that paid for the ad in cooperation, consultation, coordination, or concert with the elected officer.

COMMENTS

The Political Reform Act (PRA) has specific rules about sending mass mailings that feature public officials at public expense, which may otherwise be construed as promotional political advertising instead of informational communications. This bill creates a similar new prohibition that prohibits a large-format public advertisement from being published or displayed if the ad features an elected official affiliated with the agency that prepared the ad and the costs of distribution or design of the ad were paid for with public funds.

The author cites two main examples that warrant the need for this bill: (a) a billboard campaign paid for by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, which included large photos of locally elected board members and (b) physical and digital billboards along freeways and thoroughfares around Sacramento that include a photograph of Sacramento County Sheriff Jim Cooper.

The Senate amendments provide that an elected official who is involved in the preparation of an ad that violates this bill is jointly and severally liable for the violation with the agency that prepared the ad. If the agency published or displayed an ad that violates this bill without the involvement of any elected official, the agency would be liable for that violation. This bill, as amended in the Senate, is consistent with prior Assembly actions.

California voters passed an initiative, Proposition 9, in 1974 that created the Fair Political Practices Commission (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

"California is a leader in providing strong protections 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. AB 2413 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."

Arguments in Support

In support of a prior version of this bill, the FPPC, wrote: "The Political Reform Act of 1974 (PRA) currently prohibits certain mass mailings from being sent at the public expense if they feature an elected official or include the name, office, photograph, or other reference to an elected officer affiliated with the agency that produces or sends the mailing.

"AB 2413 would add a similar prohibition for large-format public advertisements, as defined, that includes the photograph of an elected officer affiliated with the agency that produces or purchases the large-format public advertisement, and is prepared in cooperation, consultation, coordination, or concert with the elected officer."

Arguments in Opposition

None received.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, minor and absorbable costs to the FPPC to update informational materials and provide related education and enforcement.

VOTES:

ASM ELECTIONS: 8-0-0

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

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 71-0-9

YES: 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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula, Gallagher, Lee, Lowenthal, Quirk-Silva, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Solache, Soria

SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1

YES: Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Alvarado-Gil

UPDATED

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