

## CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 789 (Bonta)

As Amended September 3, 2025

2/3 vote

**SUMMARY**

Allows a candidate or elected official, until 2029, to use an unlimited amount of campaign funds for security expenses to protect a candidate, elected officer, or the immediate family or staff of a candidate or elected officer, as specified.

**Senate Amendments** delete the Assembly-approved version of this bill, and instead:

- 1) Delete, until January 1, 2029, the \$10,000 lifetime monetary cap that limits expenditures of campaign funds used for costs related to security expenses to protect a candidate, elected officer, or the immediate family or staff of a candidate or elected officer, as specified, and instead permit a candidate or elected official to spend an unlimited amount of campaign funds for security expenses.
- 2) Clarify that security expenses do not include payments to a candidate's or elected officer's spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, parent-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, nephew, niece, aunt, uncle, or first cousin or the spouse of any such person.
- 3) Limit, beginning January 1, 2029, expenditures of campaign funds for security expenses to \$10,000 per calendar year.
- 4) Add double-jointing language to avoid chaptering problems with AB 808 (Addis) of the current legislative session.

**COMMENTS**

As approved by the Assembly, this bill would have specified that an "unreasonable rate increase" exists if the Director of the Department of Managed Health Care or the California Department of Insurance makes a determination that a rate increase is excessive, unjustified, unfairly discriminatory, or otherwise unreasonable. Subsequent to the Assembly's approval, this bill was amended in the Senate to delete the Assembly-approved provisions and to add the current provisions. The provisions added in the Senate have not been heard in a policy committee in the Assembly during this legislative session.

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

"Serving in elected office is an immense privilege but in recent years, the climate surrounding public service has shifted dramatically. Candidates, elected officials, and the staff who support them are increasingly facing serious threats, harassment, and violence simply for carrying out their duties. These threats are not abstract they are real, targeted, and growing in frequency and intensity. AB 789 responds to this alarming trend by ensuring that public servants can access

critical security resources when needed. The bill lifts the current lifetime cap on campaign funds that may be used for security-related expenses, allowing those funds to be used without limitation through January 1, 2029. After that date, the bill establishes a new, annual \$10,000 cap recognizing that ongoing threats require ongoing flexibility.

"We have seen disturbing incidents across the nation from the murder of a state legislator and their spouse in Minnesota to the evacuation of Governor Shapiro and his family in Pennsylvania due to threats and arson. These events are not isolated. They are part of a broader pattern of political intimidation, too often aimed at women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ individuals in public life. Public service should never require sacrificing one's personal safety or the safety of our families and staff. AB 789 provides a necessary tool to help protect those who step forward to serve. In doing so, it helps uphold the integrity of our democratic institutions and the safety of those who lead them."

### **Arguments in Support**

In support of a prior version of this bill, the California District Attorneys Association (CDAA), wrote: "Under current law, campaign funds may be used for security-related costs, such as installing home alarm systems or hiring personal security, but such use is capped at \$10,000 for the lifetime of the candidate or elected official. That limit is simply inadequate in today's climate, where threats to public officials and their families are more frequent, more serious, and more costly to address. AB 789 responds directly to this urgent reality by removing the lifetime cap on campaign-funded security expenses through January 1, 2029. Beginning in 2029, the bill would permit up to \$10,000 per calendar year, per individual, allowing elected officials to maintain critical protections for themselves, their families, and their staff—without being penalized for the rising costs of safety."

"CDAA supports AB 789 because the safety of candidates, officeholders, their staff, and their families is of the utmost importance; security should not depend on an arbitrary dollar amount that has not kept pace with inflation or the current threat environment."

### **Arguments in Opposition**

None received.

## **FISCAL COMMENTS**

None. This bill is keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

## **VOTES:**

### **ASM HEALTH: 13-0-2**

**YES:** Bonta, Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Arambula, Carrillo, Flora, Mark González, Krell, Patel, Celeste Rodriguez, Schiavo, Sharp-Collins, Stefani

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Chen, Sanchez

### **ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 59-4-16**

**YES:** Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Davies, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers,

Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Solache, Stefani, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

**NO:** DeMaio, Ellis, Macedo, Tangipa

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Castillo, Chen, Dixon, Flora, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Hoover, Lackey, Papan, Patterson, Ramos, Sanchez, Sharp-Collins, Soria, Ta

## **UPDATED**

VERSION: September 3, 2025

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