

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 808 (Addis)

As Amended September 2, 2025

2/3 vote

SUMMARY

Eliminates the option for certain campaign disclosure reports to be filed by fax. Provides for a required independent expenditure (IE) verification statement to appear only on the semiannual or preelection campaign statement that discloses the IE. Updates terms used in state law to reflect the electronic filing of required campaign-related reports.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Make various updates to terms used in state law to reflect the electronic filing of required campaign-related reports.
- 2) Rename "campaign statement" as a "campaign report" and modifies the definition to mean an itemized report prepared in a manner prescribed by the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) providing the information required by the Political Reform Act (PRA).
- 3) Replace the term "statement of organization" with "registration" throughout the PRA and eliminate the requirement to file a copy of that information with a local filing officer. Require the Secretary of State (SOS), instead, to make the registration available to the local filing officer within 24 hours of the registration.
- 4) Repeal a provision of law that limits the amount that a candidate can loan their own campaign to not more than \$100,000. A similar loan limit in federal law was invalidated by the United States (US) Supreme Court in 2022.
- 5) Make various technical and corresponding changes.
- 6) Add double-jointing language to avoid chaptering conflicts with AB 789 (Bonta) and SB 760 (Allen) of the current legislative session.
- 7) Provide that this bill becomes operative only once the SOS certifies a new online filing and disclosure system for campaign and lobbying disclosure reports, as specified.

COMMENTS

In 1997, the Legislature passed and Governor Pete Wilson signed SB 49 (Karnette), Chapter 866, Statutes of 1997, which amended the PRA and established the Online Disclosure Act of 1997. SB 49 required the SOS, in consultation with the FPPC, to develop and implement, by the year 2000, an online filing and disclosure system for reports and statements required to be filed under the PRA, as specified. As a result, the SOS created and deployed a system called the California Automated Lobby Activity and Campaign Contribution and Expenditure Search System, commonly referred to as Cal-Access.

Cal-Access is now 26 years old, and the SOS reports that components of the system are no longer supported by their vendor. As a result the system has periodically crashed and denied public access. Additionally, the SOS has indicated that the ability to make modifications to the

existing Cal-Access system is very limited. While the Legislature has taken steps to replace the Cal-Access system with a new disclosure system commonly referred to as the Cal-Access Replacement System (CARS), the SOS does not expect to fully deploy CARS until late 2026 at the earliest.

Unlike the current Cal-Access disclosure system, which is structured around campaign disclosure statements being filed on reporting forms that are developed by the FPPC, the new CARS system is required to be developed as a "data-driven" means for filers to submit required information that must be disclosed under state law. To reflect that data-driven approach, this bill updates terminology to transition away from terms (like statements being prepared on "a form") that generally are used to describe paper-based (rather than electronic) reports and documents.

Existing provisions of the PRA prohibit a candidate from lending more than \$100,000 to their own campaign committee. Federal law also included restrictions on candidate loans. In 2018, US Senator Ted Cruz made a loan of \$260,000 to his re-election campaign, which exceeded the federal limit of \$250,000. In 2019, Senator Cruz then challenged the federal law in order to be fully repaid and won the lawsuit. In 2022, the US Supreme Court ultimately ruled for Senator Cruz, declaring limits on candidate loans to their own campaigns as unconstitutional under the First Amendment. To conform to that Supreme Court decision, this bill deletes California's candidate loan limits.

The Senate amendments added various provisions to the bill that are consistent with this bill's original purpose of updating the PRA to facilitate the implementation of CARS. This bill, as amended in the Senate, is generally consistent with prior Assembly actions.

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.

According to the Author

"AB 808 modernizes California's campaign finance laws to support a digital system—enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and transparency for better public access to financial disclosures."

Arguments in Support

One of the co-sponsors of this bill, Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D., writes in support, "AB 808 modernizes filing processes by removing outdated fax options, standardizing terminology across the PRA, and requiring online or electronic submission of campaign reports once the new filing system is certified. It also clarifies reporting requirements for independent expenditures and lifts the cap on personal loans candidates may make to their campaigns. These changes are consistent with advances in modern technology and will apply to political campaigns, lobbying firms, and individual lobbyists who file with the [SOS]. They will actively support the State of California in its transition to CARS."

Arguments in Opposition

None received.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, negligible state costs.

VOTES:**ASM ELECTIONS: 7-0-0**

YES: Pellerin, Macedo, Bennett, Berman, Solache, Stefani, Tangipa

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

YES: Wicks, Sanchez, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Solache, Ta, Alanis

ABS, ABST OR NV: Pellerin

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 69-0-10

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula, Boerner, Carrillo, Flora, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Irwin, Celeste Rodriguez, Sanchez, Wallis

UPDATED

VERSION: September 2, 2025

CONSULTANT: Ethan Jones / ELECTIONS / (916) 319-2094

FN: 0001548