

Date of Hearing: July 16, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 280 (Cervantes) – As Amended April 10, 2025

Policy Committee: Elections

Vote: 7 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill expands the prohibition on the receipt or delivery of a campaign contribution at a state government building by eliminating the existing exception for a legislative district office and including a local government office building.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Minor and absorbable costs to the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC).

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

District offices exist to assist constituents in dealing with government agencies and facilitate representation by the Legislature, not provide an avenue for political fundraising. This bill closes this long-standing loophole by prohibiting campaign contributions in legislative district offices and in local government offices. By creating a clear line of separation between the work of government and political campaigns, this bill will help rebuild public trust in government and reaffirm California's commitment to transparency, accountability, and ethical governance.

This bill is sponsored by the FPPC and supported by California Common Cause.

2) **Political Reform Act (PRA).** Voters enacted the PRA in 1974 in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal and other campaign finance scandals, including the delivery of campaign contributions in the offices of elected officials at the State Capitol. However, the PRA did not originally include prohibitions on receiving campaign contributions in an elected official's office or in the State Capitol. AB 3502 (Agos), Chapter 920, Statutes of 1982, subsequently amended the PRA to prohibit a person from receiving, delivering, or attempting to deliver a campaign contribution in the State Capitol, a state office building, or an office for which the state pays the majority of the rent, other than a legislative district office. According to the Assembly Elections Committee's analysis of this bill, "It is unclear, however, why AB 3502 exempted legislative district offices." This bill expands the existing prohibition to apply to legislative district offices and local government office buildings.