
THIRD READING

Bill No: SB 401
Author: Hurtado (D)
Amended: 1/5/26
Vote: 27

SENATE ELECTIONS & C.A. COMMITTEE: 5-0, 1/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Choi, Allen, Durazo, Umberg

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

SUBJECT: Political Reform Act of 1974: filing deadlines: emergency situations

SOURCE: Fair Political Practices Commission

DIGEST: This bill allows the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) to extend any filing deadline under the Political Reform Act (PRA) for any individual who lives in an area of a declared emergency

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Creates the PRA, which regulates lobbyists and sets campaign finance and disclosure laws for state and local campaigns, candidates, officeholders, and ballot measures. The PRA establishes the FPPC to implement, administer, and enforce the PRA.
- 2) Requires, pursuant to the PRA, that:
 - a) Candidates for elective office, committees formed to support or oppose candidates for public office or ballot measures, slate mailer organizations, and other specified entities, file periodic and activity-based campaign statements and reports disclosing contributions, expenditures, and other related matters.

- b) An elected officer or member of the Public Utilities Commission file reports of specified payments in excess of \$5,000 annually made at the behest of that officer or member.
- c) Public officials and candidates periodically file statements of economic interests to disclose to the public their financial interests. These are filed on the Form 700.
- d) Lobbyists and their employers file registrations and periodic activity reports to identify those lobbying, for whom they are lobbying, and the financial arrangements of that lobbying, as well as a recounting of campaign contributions delivered by each lobbyist.

3) Prescribes, pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act, the process for the governor to declare a state of emergency and local governing bodies to declare a local emergency, when specified conditions of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons and property exist.

This bill allows the FPPC to extend any filing deadline set in the PRA for any individuals living in an area impacted by an emergency the governor or a local governing body has proclaimed.

Comments

Author's Statement. Victims of natural disaster and other emergency situations like the Palisades and Eaton fires should not be overburdened when it may be difficult or downright impossible to file statements of economic interest on time. This bill removes bureaucratic barriers so that the FPPC may extend deadlines when appropriate, so the state does not unfairly penalize families for failing to meet program deadlines out of a filer's control. This bill would allow families to focus on rebuilding more quickly, access essential services, and not be overburdened at a time when they should be focused on making sure their family is safe and secure.

Previous Executive Orders. In past instances, governors through executive orders have extended deadlines for filings under the PRA, but these have typically been restricted to those related to the Form 700 or behested payments. Most recently, this occurred due to the fires in Los Angeles and Ventura counties in January of 2025.

Broad grant of authority. This bill grants the FPPC very broad authority to extend any filing deadline in the PRA, whether it be for candidates, lobbyists, non-elected Form 700 filers, or elected officials. The qualification for this extension is simply

that “individuals … live in an area impacted by an emergency situation.” This bill does not define “an area” or require the individual to be actually impacted. This bill further does not set a timeframe for these extensions. Based on discussion during the committee hearing on this bill and comments made by the author’s staff, amendments are expected to address these concerns.

The FPPC does not currently have explicit statutory or regulatory authority to issue filing extensions under the PRA, but during the enforcement process, the FPPC considers individual circumstances, potentially including that the respondent was affected by a declared emergency.

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

SUPPORT: (Verified 1/21/26)

Fair Political Practices Commission (source)

OPPOSITION: (Verified 1/21/26)

None received

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