Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Buffy Wicks, Chair
SB 401 (Hurtado) – As Amended June 1, 2026

Policy Committee: Elections Vote: 7 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill authorizes the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) to extend certain filing deadlines under the Political Reform Act (PRA) in response to certain emergency situations.

Specifically, this bill:

1) Authorizes the FPPC to extend a PRA filing deadline by up to 60 days for an individual that lives in an area impacted by an emergency proclaimed pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act (CESA) if the emergency situation is reasonably likely to affect the individual's ability to timely file.

2) Prohibits the FPPC from extending the filing deadline for a campaign statement or report during the 90 days before an election.

FISCAL EFFECT:

1) Minor and absorbable costs to the FPPC.

2) One-time costs ranging between approximately $275,000 to $375,000 to the Secretary of State (SOS) to update the CAL-ACCESS Replacement System (CARS) to be able to reflect the correct filing due date for the specific subset of filers for which the FPPC extends a PRA filing deadline (GF). The SOS anticipates being able to manually waive late filing penalties for impacted filers, but notes that that without the system enhancement, the filings would continue to display as "late" in CARS and on the public-facing website, despite the filer having an approved extension.

COMMENTS:

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

> Public officials who are victims of natural disasters and other emergency situations like the Palisades and Eaton fires in 2025 and during the COVID-19 Pandemic should not be overburdened when it may be difficult or downright impossible to file various statements of interest required under the [PRA] on time. This bill removes bureaucratic barriers so the FPPC may extend deadlines when appropriate, so the state does not unfairly penalize families for failing to meet filing deadlines outside of their control.

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

2) **Background.** ***PRA Filing Deadlines.*** Although some FPPC filing deadlines are set by regulation, most deadlines are prescribed in the Government Code, which means the FPPC lacks the authority to modify or extend most deadlines to account for extenuating circumstances. However, the FPPC generally considers individual circumstances during an enforcement proceeding, including whether a respondent was affected by an emergency.

   CESA. The CESA authorizes the Governor to proclaim a state of emergency when conditions of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of people or property exist within the state. During such an emergency, the CESA grants the Governor broad authority to suspend state statutes and the orders, rules, and regulations of state agencies when strict compliance would prevent, hinder, or delay efforts to mitigate the effects of the emergency.

   As authorized by the CESA, gubernatorial emergency proclamations have occasionally provided relief from PRA filing deadlines. For example, Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-17-25, issued in response to the 2025 Los Angeles-area wildfire disaster, extended by 60 days the deadline for public officials in Los Angeles County to file behested payment reports and statements of economic interest. This bill authorizes the FPPC to extend PRA filing deadlines for individuals affected by a CESA-proclaimed emergency. However, this bill limits such an extension to no more than 60 days, consistent with extensions provided during prior emergencies, and prohibits an extension for campaign disclosure reports due in the 90-day period preceding an election.

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