

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 401
Author: Hurtado (D)
Amended: 6/1/26
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

SENATE FLOOR: 40-0, 1/27/26
AYES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0, 8/19/26 - See last page for vote

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 an individual who lives in an area impacted by an emergency situation that is likely to affect the individual's ability to timely file.

Assembly Amendments limit the time of the filing extension, prohibit extending filing deadlines for campaign statements during the 90 days before an election, and set a standard to ensure that the emergency situation would affect the ability to timely file.

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 offices, 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, processes 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:

- 1) Allows the FPPC to extend by up to 60 days 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, provided that the emergency is reasonably likely to impact the individual's ability to file on time.

- 2) Precludes the FPPC from using this authority to extend a filing deadline for a campaign statement or report in the 90 days before an election.

Comments

Author's Statement. Victims of natural disasters and other declared emergencies should not face unnecessary penalties when circumstances outside their control make it difficult to meet filing deadlines under the Political Reform Act.

Recent emergencies, including the Palisades and Eaton fires, have shown how quickly extraordinary circumstances can disrupt the lives of Californians and make timely filing difficult or impossible.

This bill provides a narrow and commonsense solution by authorizing the FPPC to extend certain filing deadlines when a declared emergency is reasonably likely to affect a filer's ability to file on time. The bill also includes important safeguards to protect transparency and accountability by limiting any extension to no more than 60 days and prohibiting extensions for campaign reports or statements due within 90 days before an election.

This measure ensures that the FPPC has the flexibility to respond appropriately during emergencies while maintaining the integrity of California's disclosure laws.

Previous Executive Orders. In past instances, governors through executive orders accompanying declared emergencies have extended deadlines for filings under the PRA. These extensions 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. This bill grants the FPPC broad authority to extend any deadline under the PRA, including the filing of campaign reports, provided that it is not within 90 days of an election.

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

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations:

- 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.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/17/26)

Fair Political Practices Commission (source)
California Common Cause

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/17/26)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: California Common Cause writes that it supports “the bill's goal of ensuring that filers are not penalized when emergencies disrupt their ability to comply with PRA reporting requirements.” Specifically, Common Cause believes that providing reasonable flexibility during genuine emergencies helps promote fairness while recognizing that circumstances beyond a filer's control may make compliance temporarily impossible. The organization is “particularly appreciative that the bill now includes important safeguards to ensure that flexibility does not come at the expense of transparency.”

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 8/19/26, 76-0

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

No Vote Recorded: Patterson, Quirk-Silva, Blanca Rubio.

Prepared by: Carrie Cornwell / E. & C.A. / (916) 651-4106
8/19/26 14:39:00

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