

PROPOSED CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM LEGISLATION

2022 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

The Commonwealth of Virginia just held its most expensive election campaign in history. A record amount of money, estimated by VPAP at \$7 million, was contributed by undisclosed donors and used in attack ads focused on candidates in both parties.

Virginia is rated 46 out of 50 in the 2020 S.W.A.M.P Index, a ranking of states based on accountability and transparency in ethics and related legislation.

01 RESTRICTING PERSONAL USE OF CAMPAIGN FUNDS

Virginia is one of two states with no restrictions on personal use of campaign funds. Last year, a proposed bill died in the Senate after the House of Delegates voted for it 100 to 0. The redrafted bill has revisions based on judicially tested federal law. All candidates for federal office are subject to this law.

PATRON: DELEGATE MARCUS SIMON

DRAFT BILL

02 STRENGTHENING CURRENT DISCLOSURE PROVISIONS

The provisions of the bill will likely be based primarily upon testimony given by the Campaign Legal Center:

- 1) require electronic filing of independent expenditures in the same manner as state campaign disclosure filings,
- 2) tighten disclosure requirements on independent expenditures funds, and
- 3) upgrade information technology and user support to enhance transparency in collection and reporting of all campaign finance data.

These proposals include multi-level reporting of large contributions traced to the original source. A number of other states already have these requirements.

POTENTIAL PATRONS: DELEGATE DAN HELMER & SENATOR BARBARA FAVOLA

03 ENHANCING OVERSIGHT AUTHORITY OF THE STATE BOARD OR ELECTIONS

Current campaign finance laws, such as the stand-by-your-ad, cannot be monitored/enforced by the Department of Elections due to lack of capacity, both financial and staffing, and the current regulatory status of the State Board of Elections. This bill would propose enhancing oversight by authorizing the Department of Elections to review campaign finance disclosure filings for accuracy and completeness. It would also require all local candidates to file campaign finance disclosure forms electronically.

POTENTIAL PATRON: DELEGATE DAVID BULOVA

04 LIMITATIONS ON CONTRIBUTIONS

Virginia is one of only five states with no donation limitations. Recommendations on limitations go back 30 years to the Governor Wilder's Commission Report on Campaign Finance. This bill could set donation limits at federal levels. Higher limits may be considered, but any proposed limit should not be higher than national norms documented by the National Conference of State Legislators. Corporate contributions should be banned (similar to federal law), and limits should be placed on registered lobbyists' donations.

POTENTIAL PATRONS: DELEGATE SUHAS SUBRAMANIAN & SENATOR CHAP PETERSON



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