

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 254 (Delegate Kagan)

Commerce and Government Matters

Election Laws - Campaign Reports - Privacy of Contributor Data

This bill prohibits the sale or use of information obtained solely from reports, statements, or accounts relating to campaign contributions for commercial purposes or charitable solicitations. The bill authorizes a candidate or political committee to use up to 10 pseudonyms to test whether campaign fund-raising information is being used for these purposes. A candidate or political committee that uses pseudonyms must deduct the dollar amount of the fictitious contribution under pseudonyms from the report, statement, or account submitted to the State Board of Elections. The dollar amount of a fictitious contributor may not exceed \$100. The board must maintain a list of filed pseudonyms, but exclude the list from the public record. Any distribution of contributor information over the Internet is required to carry a warning that: (1) unauthorized use of the data is illegal; (2) there are penalties for unauthorized use of the data; and (3) some of the contributor data may be false. The State Board of Elections is required to adopt regulations to implement the bill. Unauthorized use of contributor information is punishable by up to \$2,500 in fines or 5 years imprisonment or both.

The bill is effective July 1, 1999.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The State Board of Elections could handle the bill's requirements with existing resources. The civil/criminal penalty provisions of this bill are not expected to significantly affect State finances or operations.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 10, 1999

dmm\jr

Analysis by: Thomas P. Hickey

Direct Inquiries to:
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510