

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 520 (Senator Van Hollen. *et al.*)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Campaign Finance Reform Act

This bill prohibits a candidate or a candidate's committee from receiving more than 20% of aggregate campaign finance contributions and transfers from political action committees. If a candidate or a candidate's committee violates this limit by more than \$500, the candidate is subject to a civil penalty that is equal to twice the amount of the funds that exceed \$500. The State Board of Elections, represented by the State Prosecutor, would institute the civil action.

Except for elections held during calendar 2000, the bill would apply to transfers and contributions received since January 2000. For any elections held in calendar 2000, the bill would apply to contributions and transfers received by a candidate on or after January 1, 2001.

"Political action committee" is defined as a political committee that is not a political party, a central committee, or a political committee organized and operated by and solely on behalf of an individual running for any elective office.

The bill is effective June 1, 2000.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The civil penalty provision of the bill would not significantly alter State operations or finances. The State Board of Elections could monitor campaign finance reports with existing resources. The Office of the State Prosecutor could handle any increased workload using existing resources.

Local Effect: None. Local boards of elections would not be required to monitor transfers and contributions to candidates.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Total contributions to a candidate from any individual, association, unincorporated association, corporation, or any other entity may not exceed \$4,000 during a single election cycle. There are no other limitations on the contributions and transfers that a candidate or a candidate's committee may receive from political action committees.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: The bill was introduced as SB 584 in the 1999 session and received an unfavorable report from the Senate Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 10, 2000
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Analysis by: Mark Collins

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