

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 76 (Delegates Kagan and Dewberry)

Commerce and Government Matters

Election Law - Privacy of Contributor Data

This bill prohibits the sale or use of campaign contribution reports, statements, and accounts for the purpose of commercial or contribution solicitation, except by the candidate or political committee that filed the reports, statements, or accounts. Violators are subject to a fine of up to \$2,500, or imprisonment for up to five years, or both. To protect contributors, the bill also authorizes a political committee to submit contribution reports with up to ten pseudonyms, so long as the committee attaches a list identifying which names are fake. The public record will not include the list that identifies the pseudonyms. Internet access to the report will include a statement that warns readers that some of the information may be false and that unauthorized use of contributor data is illegal and subject to penalty. The State Board of Elections shall adopt regulations necessary to implement the bill's provisions.

Fiscal Summary

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

Local Effect: The criminal penalty provisions are not expected to significantly affect local finances or operations.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: All contributor information is part of the public record and is not protected

from solicitors.

Background: Campaign finance reports are currently available to the public in paper format at the State Board of Elections office in Annapolis, and some records are also available from the local boards of elections. The State Board of Elections hopes to have campaign finance information available on the Internet as soon as November 2000. With more widely disseminated campaign financing reports, the concern for protection of contributors increases.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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