

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 308 (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 contributions from a "political action committee" in excess of 20% of the candidate's aggregate campaign finance contributions and transfers. It provides a penalty for violations of the provision in excess of \$500 equal to twice the amount of funds exceeding the limit. The bill also authorizes the State Board of Elections, represented by the State prosecutor, to institute a civil action against violators.

This bill is effective January 1, 2003.

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: A similar bill was introduced as SB 520 in the 2000 session. It was not reported from the Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee. A similar bill was introduced as SB 584 in the 1999 session. It received an unfavorable report from the 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 – February 6, 2001
jm/jr

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