

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 544
Ways and Means

(Delegate Heller)

Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs

Election Law - Campaign Account - Debit Card Disbursements

This bill allows a treasurer, but not a subtreasurer, of a campaign finance entity to make a disbursement by debit card from a designated campaign account.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any cost to change campaign finance report electronic filing software would be minimal and could be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A campaign finance entity generally may not directly or indirectly make a disbursement except by check from a designated campaign account. However, a campaign finance entity or individual authorized by the entity may pay an expense of the entity from funds other than the campaign account if • the expense is supported by a receipt provided to the campaign finance entity; and • the campaign finance entity reimburses the person who paid the expense by check from the campaign account and reports the expense as an expenditure of the campaign.

Background: An increasing number of vendors no longer accept paper checks for payment. Currently, check card, credit card, or debit card expenditures are made for a campaign by individuals, who are then reimbursed by check from the campaign account.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 1380 of 2007, a similar bill, was passed by the House and received a hearing in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee but no further action was taken. HB 357 of 2005, HB 170 of 2004, and HB 476 of 2003, also similar bills, were all passed by the House but each received an unfavorable report from Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs. HB 141 of 2005, another similar bill, received an unfavorable report from the House Ways and Means Committee. HB 457 of 2005, a similar bill, received a hearing from Ways and Means but was subsequently withdrawn.

Cross File: None.

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

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