

SENATE BILL 119

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By: **Senators Kelley, Benson, Colburn, Conway, Getty, Jones-Rodwell,
McFadden, Middleton, Pugh, Reilly, and Shank**

Introduced and read first time: January 21, 2011

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Use of Campaign Funds for Meeting and Conference Expenses**
3 **and Other Activities**

4 FOR the purpose of including a disbursement to pay the costs for travel, lodging,
5 meals, and registration expenses to attend certain meetings or conferences and
6 other activities as an allowable expenditure of funds from a campaign account
7 under the State election law; prohibiting a campaign finance entity from using
8 campaign funds for certain personal expenses; requiring the State Board of
9 Elections to adopt certain regulations; prohibiting a responsible officer of a
10 campaign finance entity from issuing or authorizing an expenditure except as
11 authorized by the State election law; and generally relating to the use of
12 campaign funds to pay expenses for a candidate's or an elected official's
13 attendance at certain meetings and conferences and certain other activities.

14 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
15 Article – Election Law
16 Section 1–101(o) and 13–218
17 Annotated Code of Maryland
18 (2010 Replacement Volume)

19 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
20 Article – Election Law
21 Section 1–101(aa), 13–245, and 13–602
22 Annotated Code of Maryland
23 (2010 Replacement Volume)

24 Preamble

25 WHEREAS, Campaign contributions regulated by the Maryland State Board of
26 Elections may be used for legally procured goods and services that “... promote or

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 assist in the promotion of the success or defeat of a candidate ...”; i.e., to enhance the
2 electability of the person on whose behalf the campaign finance entity is established;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, State election law does not explicitly specify or limit the categories
5 of expenditures that a campaign finance entity may make from a campaign account to
6 “... promote or assist in the promotion of the success or defeat of a candidate ...”; and

7 WHEREAS, A letter of advice issued July 22, 2009, by the Attorney General of
8 Maryland, Office of Counsel to the General Assembly, advises that campaign funds
9 may not be used to fund a State legislator’s travel, lodging, meals, and registration
10 expenses at a legislative conference; and

11 WHEREAS, The purposes of many such meetings and conferences are to: (1)
12 educate participants about the legislative process; (2) inform participants regarding
13 other states’ legislative solutions to similar problems that may be impacting
14 Maryland; and (3) engage participants about issues and strategies to address matters
15 emanating from the federal government; now, therefore,

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
17 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

18 Article – Election Law

19 1–101.

20 (o) (1) “Contribution” means the gift or transfer, or promise of gift or
21 transfer, of money or other thing of value to a campaign finance entity to promote or
22 assist in the promotion of the success or defeat of a candidate, political party, or
23 question.

24 (2) “Contribution” includes proceeds from the sale of tickets to a
25 campaign fund–raising event.

26 (aa) (1) “Expenditure” means a gift, transfer, disbursement, or promise of
27 money or a thing of value [by or on behalf of a campaign finance entity] **IN ORDER** to:

28 [(1)] (I) promote or assist in the promotion of the success or defeat of
29 a candidate, political party, or question at an election; [or]

30 [(2)] (II) pay for the publication expense of a legislative newsletter
31 under Title 13, Subtitle 4 of this article;

32 (III) **PAY FOR TRAVEL, LODGING, MEALS, AND REGISTRATION**
33 **EXPENSES OF AN OFFICEHOLDER OR A CANDIDATE ASSOCIATED WITH**
34 **ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OR CONFERENCES FOCUSED ON LEGISLATIVE**

1 ISSUES, PROCESS, OR PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS PERTINENT TO THE OFFICE
2 THAT THE ELECTED OFFICIAL HOLDS OR THAT THE CANDIDATE SEEKS;

3 (IV) ADVANCE THE PURPOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE
4 ENTITY OR CANDIDATE BY:

5 1. DISSEMINATING INFORMATION TO A VOTER OR
6 POTENTIAL VOTER ABOUT AN ISSUE OF PUBLIC INTEREST; OR

7 2. PAYING DUES ASSOCIATED WITH MEMBERSHIP
8 FOR A LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS OR COMMITTEE, POLITICAL CLUB, OR
9 COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION; OR

10 (V) PAY FOR COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOLICITATION
11 OF CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATE'S CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY.

12 (2) "EXPENDITURE" DOES NOT INCLUDE A DIRECT OR AN
13 INDIRECT DISBURSEMENT OR PAYMENT FOR:

14 (I) PERSONAL USE BY A CANDIDATE, AN OFFICEHOLDER,
15 OR A RESPONSIBLE OFFICER OF A CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY; OR

16 (II) COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MAINTENANCE AND
17 STAFFING OF AN OFFICEHOLDER'S OFFICE.

18 13-218.

19 (a) All assets received by or on behalf of a campaign finance entity shall be:

20 (1) delivered to the treasurer; and

21 (2) maintained by the treasurer for the purposes of the campaign
22 finance entity.

23 (b) (1) Assets of a campaign finance entity may be disbursed only:

24 (i) if they have passed through the hands of the treasurer; and

25 (ii) in accordance with the purposes of the entity.

26 (2) Subject to § 13-220(b)(2) and (c) of this subtitle and except as
27 provided in subsection (d) of this section, the treasurer shall make all disbursements
28 for the campaign finance entity.

29 (c) The treasurer of a State or county central committee of a political party
30 may not make any disbursement of the central committee's assets, or incur any

1 liability on its behalf, without authority and direction from the chairman of the central
2 committee.

3 (d) (1) If the treasurer of a campaign finance entity is temporarily unable
4 to perform the duties of the office, the chairman of the campaign finance entity may
5 make a disbursement on behalf of the campaign finance entity in the same manner as
6 the treasurer.

7 (2) If the chairman makes a disbursement under this subsection,
8 within 7 days after making the disbursement, the chairman shall submit a report to
9 the treasurer for the account book of the campaign finance entity, including:

10 (i) a statement of the expenditure made under the authority of
11 the chairman;

12 (ii) the name and address of the person to whom the
13 expenditure was made;

14 (iii) the purpose for which the expenditure was made; and

15 (iv) a copy of the receipt for the expenditure that was made.

16 (3) A chairman who is a candidate may not make a disbursement for a
17 campaign finance entity.

18 13–245.

19 (a) In this section, “walk-around services” means the following activities if
20 performed for money while the polls are open:

21 (1) distributing campaign material;

22 (2) stationing a person, including oneself, or an object in the path of a
23 voter;

24 (3) electioneering or canvassing as described in § 16–206 of this
25 article;

26 (4) communicating in any other manner a voting preference or choice;
27 or

28 (5) performing any other service as a poll worker or distributor of
29 sample ballots.

30 (b) This section does not apply to:

31 (1) meals, beverages, and refreshments served to campaign workers;

1 (2) salaries of regularly employed personnel in campaign
2 headquarters;

3 (3) media advertising, including newspaper, radio, television,
4 billboard, or aerial advertising;

5 (4) rent and regular office expenses; or

6 (5) the cost of telephoning voters or transporting voters to and from
7 polling places.

8 (c) (1) A campaign finance entity, or a person acting on its behalf, may
9 not at any time, directly or indirectly, pay or incur an obligation to pay, and a person
10 may not, directly or indirectly, receive any money or thing of value, for a political
11 endorsement.

12 (2) (i) A campaign finance entity, or a person acting on its behalf,
13 that pays any person for walk-around services shall make all payments by check from
14 a campaign account designated under § 13-220(a) of this subtitle.

15 (ii) All payments made under subparagraph (i) of this
16 paragraph shall be reported in accordance with § 13-304 of this title.

17 **(3) A CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY MAY NOT DIRECTLY OR**
18 **INDIRECTLY EXPEND CAMPAIGN FUNDS FOR THE PERSONAL USE OF THE**
19 **CANDIDATE OR A RESPONSIBLE OFFICER OF THE CANDIDATE'S CAMPAIGN**
20 **FINANCE ENTITY.**

21 **(4) THE STATE BOARD SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO**
22 **IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION.**

23 13-602.

24 (a) (1) A person may not directly or indirectly give, offer, or promise
25 money, aid, a gift, an advantage, a preferment, an emolument, or any other valuable
26 thing to another person for the purpose of inducing or procuring that person to vote or
27 refrain from voting for or against:

28 (i) an individual, question, or measure at an election or political
29 convention; or

30 (ii) the election of an officer by the General Assembly.

31 (2) A person may not directly or indirectly receive, accept, request, or
32 solicit money, aid, a gift, an advantage, a preferment, an emolument, or any other
33 valuable thing from another person for the purpose of inducing or procuring a third

1 person to vote or refrain from voting for or against an individual, question, or measure
2 at an election or political convention.

3 (3) A person may not vote or refrain from voting for or against an
4 individual, question, or measure at an election or a political convention, in
5 consideration of money, aid, a gift, an advantage, a preferment, an emolument, or any
6 other valuable thing paid, received, accepted, or promised to the advantage of that
7 person or of another person.

8 (4) (i) A person, to defray the costs of a campaign finance entity,
9 may not directly or indirectly pay, give, or promise money or any other valuable thing
10 to any person other than a campaign finance entity.

11 (ii) Subparagraph (i) of this paragraph does not apply to:

12 1. dues regularly paid for membership in a political club
13 if all of the money that is spent by that political club in connection with any campaign
14 finance activity is paid through a treasurer as provided in this title;

15 2. an individual volunteering the individual's time or
16 personal vehicle in accordance with § 13–232 of this title;

17 3. an employer's accumulation of employee contributions
18 in accordance with § 13–242 of this title; or

19 4. advertising costs or other expenses incident to the
20 expression of personal views in accordance with § 13–102 of this title.

21 (5) A person may not directly or indirectly pay or promise to pay a
22 campaign finance entity in a name other than the person's name.

23 (6) A responsible officer of a campaign finance entity may not
24 knowingly receive a payment or promise of payment and enter it or cause it to be
25 entered in an account book in a name that the responsible officer knows is not the
26 name of the person that made the payment or the promise to pay.

27 (7) An employer who pays employees in envelopes may not mark on or
28 enclose in the envelopes a political motto, device, or argument that contains express or
29 implied threats intended to influence the political opinions or actions of those
30 employees.

31 (8) During the 90 days before an election, an employer may not exhibit
32 in the employer's workplace:

33 (i) a threat, a notice, or information that, on the election or
34 defeat of a particular ticket or candidate:

35 1. work will cease, wholly or partly;

1 2. the workplace will close; or

2 3. employees' wages will be reduced; or

3 (ii) any other threat, expressed or implied, intended to influence
4 the political opinions or actions of the employer's employees.

5 (9) A person may not publish or distribute, or cause to be published or
6 distributed, campaign material that violates § 13-401 of this title.

7 (10) A candidate may not make a payment, contribution, or
8 expenditure, or incur a liability to pay, contribute, or expend, from the candidate's
9 personal funds any money or valuable thing in a manner not authorized by § 13-230 of
10 this title.

11 (11) An individual may not sign the name of any other individual on
12 any form or other document under this title, without the authority of the individual
13 whose name is signed.

14 **(12) A RESPONSIBLE OFFICER OF A CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY**
15 **MAY NOT ISSUE OR AUTHORIZE A PAYMENT, DISBURSEMENT, TRANSFER, OR**
16 **PROMISE OF MONEY FOR AN EXPENDITURE EXCEPT AS EXPRESSLY AUTHORIZED**
17 **UNDER THIS ARTICLE.**

18 (b) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on
19 conviction is:

20 (1) subject to a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or imprisonment not
21 exceeding 1 year or both; and

22 (2) ineligible to hold any public or party office for 4 years after the
23 date of the offense.

24 (c) (1) The State Prosecutor may prosecute, in any jurisdiction of the
25 State, a person that the State Prosecutor believes to be guilty of a willful violation of
26 this section.

27 (2) A State's Attorney may prosecute a person that the State's
28 Attorney believes to be guilty of a willful violation of this section in the county in
29 which the State's Attorney serves.

30 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
31 October 1, 2011.