

SENATE BILL 153

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(PRE-FILED)

6lr0079
CF HB 267

By: **Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee (By Request – Departmental – State Board of Elections)**

Requested: September 22, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Committee Report: Favorable

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: February 20, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Campaign Finance Entities – Oversight and Control of Campaign**
3 **Funds**

4 FOR the purpose of altering the manner in which a campaign manager may be appointed;
5 providing that the treasurer is the financial steward of a campaign finance entity;
6 altering requirements for assets received by or on behalf of a campaign finance entity
7 and disbursements made by or on behalf of a campaign finance entity; repealing the
8 authority of the chair of a campaign finance entity to approve a disbursement on
9 behalf of the campaign finance entity under certain circumstances; authorizing the
10 treasurer of a campaign finance entity to designate authorized agents to make
11 disbursements on behalf of the campaign finance entity; prohibiting a candidate from
12 having access to, or making a disbursement from, campaign funds in the designated
13 campaign account; and generally relating to campaign finance entities and oversight
14 and control of campaign funds.

15 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
16 Article – Election Law
17 Section 1–101(a), 13–248, and 13–604.1(f)
18 Annotated Code of Maryland
19 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

20 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
21 Article – Election Law

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 Section 1–101(j) and (mm), 2–301(b)(1)(iii), 13–207(c) and (d), 13–212, 13–215(a) and
2 (c), 13–218, 13–220(e), 13–246, 13–304(b), and 13–604.1(b)(1) and (d)
3 Annotated Code of Maryland
4 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

7 **Article – Election Law**

8 1–101.

9 (a) In this article the following words have the meanings indicated unless a
10 different meaning is clearly intended from the context.

11 (j) “Campaign manager” means a person designated by a candidate[,] or [the
12 candidate’s representative,] **CHAIR OF A CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY** to exercise general
13 overall responsibility for the conduct of the candidate’s political campaign.

14 (mm) “Responsible officers” means the [chairman] **CHAIR** and treasurer of a
15 political committee.

16 2–301.

17 (b) (1) An individual subject to this section may not, while holding the position:

18 (iii) except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, as to any
19 candidate or any matter that is subject to an election under this article:

20 1. be a campaign manager;

21 2. be a treasurer [or subtreasurer] for a campaign finance
22 entity; or

23 3. take any other active part in political management or a
24 political campaign.

25 13–207.

26 (c) To establish a political committee:

27 (1) a [chairman] **CHAIR** and a treasurer shall be appointed on a form that
28 the State Board prescribes and that is signed by the [chairman] **CHAIR** and treasurer and
29 includes:

1 (i) the residence addresses of the [chairman] CHAIR and the
2 treasurer;

3 (ii) if the [chairman] CHAIR and treasurer affirmatively consent to
4 receiving notice under this title only by electronic mail, the electronic mail address of the
5 [chairman] CHAIR and the treasurer; and

6 (iii) the information required by § 13–208 of this subtitle; and

7 (2) the form shall be filed with the State Board.

8 (3) The [chairman] CHAIR or treasurer of a political committee shall notify
9 the State Board of a change in the residence address of the [chairman] CHAIR or treasurer
10 no later than 21 days before the day on which the political committee's next campaign
11 finance report is due under § 13–309 of this title.

12 (4) The [chairman] CHAIR or treasurer of a political committee shall notify
13 the State Board of a change in the electronic mail address of the [chairman] CHAIR or
14 treasurer by the date specified in paragraph (3) of this subsection if the [chairman] CHAIR
15 and treasurer of the political committee have affirmatively consented to receiving notice
16 under this title only by electronic mail.

17 (d) (1) A [chairman] CHAIR or treasurer of a political committee may resign
18 by completing a resignation form that the State Board prescribes and filing the form with
19 the State Board.

20 (2) If a vacancy occurs in the office of [chairman] CHAIR or the office of
21 treasurer, the political committee promptly shall appoint a new [chairman] CHAIR or
22 treasurer in accordance with this section.

23 (3) A political committee may not receive or disburse money or any other
24 thing of value if there is a vacancy in the office of [chairman] CHAIR or the office of
25 treasurer.

26 13–212.

27 [An individual] A CANDIDATE OR CHAIR OF A CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY may
28 appoint a campaign manager by:

29 (1) completing a form that the State Board prescribes and that includes the
30 name and address of that campaign manager; and

31 (2) filing the form with the [board where the individual is required to file
32 a certificate of candidacy] STATE BOARD.

1 13-215.

2 (a) Each [chairman] CHAIR, treasurer, and campaign manager shall be a
3 registered voter of the State.

4 (c) Subject to subsection (b) of this section, the [chairman] CHAIR, treasurer, or
5 campaign manager of a campaign finance entity may serve as the [chairman] CHAIR,
6 treasurer, or campaign manager of another campaign finance entity.

7 13-218.

8 (a) **THE TREASURER IS THE FINANCIAL STEWARD OF THE CAMPAIGN**
9 **FINANCE ENTITY.**

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

11 (1) delivered to the [treasurer] CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY; [and]

12 (2) maintained by the treasurer for the purposes of the campaign finance
13 entity;

14 **(3) ACCOUNTED FOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 13-221 OF THIS**
15 **SUBTITLE; AND**

16 **(4) CONSIDERED OWNED BY THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY.**

17 **[(b)] (C)** (1) Assets of a campaign finance entity may be disbursed only:

18 (i) if [they have passed through the hands of the treasurer]
19 **ACCOUNTED FOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 13-221 OF THIS SUBTITLE;** and

20 (ii) in accordance with the purposes of the entity **AND THIS TITLE.**

21 (2) Subject to § 13-220(b)(2) and (c) of this subtitle and except as provided
22 in subsection **[(d)] (E)** of this section, the treasurer shall approve all disbursements for the
23 campaign finance entity.

24 **[(c)] (D) (1)** The treasurer of a State or county central committee of a political
25 party may not approve any disbursement of the central committee's assets, or incur any
26 liability on its behalf, without authority and direction from the [chairman] CHAIR of the
27 central committee.

28 **(2) THE TREASURER OF A POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE OF A**
29 **POLITICAL PARTY MAY NOT APPROVE ANY DISBURSEMENT OF THE POLITICAL**

1 ACTION COMMITTEE'S ASSETS, OR INCUR ANY LIABILITY ON ITS BEHALF, WITHOUT
2 AUTHORITY AND DIRECTION FROM THE CHAIR OF THE POLITICAL ACTION
3 COMMITTEE.

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

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

11 (i) a statement of the expenditure approved under the authority of
12 the chairman;

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

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

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

17 (1) THE TREASURER MAY DESIGNATE AUTHORIZED AGENTS OF THE
18 CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY TO MAKE DISBURSEMENTS ON BEHALF OF AND IN
19 ACCORDANCE WITH THE PURPOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY.

20 (2) THE DESIGNATION OF AN AUTHORIZED AGENT MUST BE MADE IN
21 WRITING BEFORE THE FIRST DISBURSEMENT IS MADE BY THE AUTHORIZED AGENT.

22 (3) ANY ACTION TAKEN BY THE DESIGNATED AUTHORIZED AGENT ON
23 BEHALF OF THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE
24 TREASURER.

25 (4) A DESIGNATED AUTHORIZED AGENT:

26 (I) HAS A FIDUCIARY DUTY TO THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY
27 FOR THE AGENT'S CONDUCT IN MAKING DISBURSEMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE
28 CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY; AND

29 (II) SHALL CONFIRM THE AGENT'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE
30 FIDUCIARY DUTY BY SIGNING THE WRITTEN DESIGNATION THAT INCLUDES A
31 STATEMENT OF THE DUTY.

1 **(5) A DESIGNATED AUTHORIZED AGENT MAY ASSIST THE TREASURER**
2 **IN THE PREPARATION OF ANY REQUIRED FILINGS WITH THE STATE BOARD.**

3 ~~[(3)]~~ **(6)** A [chairman who is a] candidate may not [approve] **HAVE**
4 **ACCESS TO, OR MAKE** a disbursement for a campaign finance entity **FROM, FUNDS**
5 **DEPOSITED IN THE DESIGNATED CAMPAIGN ACCOUNT ESTABLISHED UNDER §**
6 **13-220 OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

7 13-220.

8 (e) Within 30 days after filing a campaign finance report at the State Board, the
9 treasurer of an authorized candidate campaign committee shall provide both the candidate
10 and the [chairman] **CHAIR** with a copy of the most recent campaign account bank
11 statement.

12 13-246.

13 A person who claims that money is due from a campaign finance entity shall present
14 a claim for payment to the treasurer [or subtreasurer] not later than 30 days after the
15 election for which the liability was incurred.

16 13-248.

17 If a responsible officer of a campaign finance entity has a compensation agreement
18 with the campaign finance entity, before making a disbursement for the compensation, the
19 campaign finance entity shall submit to the State Board:

20 (1) a copy of the compensation agreement; and

21 (2) if the campaign finance entity is an authorized candidate campaign
22 committee, the written consent of the candidate.

23 13-304.

24 (b) A campaign finance report filed by a campaign finance entity under subsection
25 (a) of this section shall include:

26 (1) the information required by the State Board with respect to all
27 contributions received and all expenditures made by or on behalf of the campaign finance
28 entity during the designated reporting period; [and]

29 (2) the information regarding the occupations and employers of
30 contributors required to be recorded by the treasurer of a campaign finance entity under §
31 13-221 of this title; **AND**

1 **(3) THE WRITTEN DESIGNATIONS NAMING THE AUTHORIZED AGENTS**
2 **WHO MAY ACT ON THE TREASURER'S BEHALF, IF ANY.**

3 13-604.1.

4 (b) The State Board may impose a civil penalty in accordance with this section for
5 the following violations:

6 (1) making a disbursement in a manner not [authorized in § 13-218(b)(2),
7 (c), and (d)] **IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 13-218(C)(2), (D), AND (E)(6)** of this title;

8 (d) (1) Except as otherwise provided in this title or as provided in paragraph
9 (2) of this subsection, the amount of a civil penalty imposed under this section may not
10 exceed \$1,000 for each violation.

11 (2) As to a violation of § 13-235 of this title, the campaign finance entity
12 that receives a contribution as a result of a violation shall:

13 (i) refund the contribution to the contributor; and

14 (ii) pay a civil penalty that equals \$1,000 plus the amount of the
15 contribution, unless the State Board at its discretion assesses a lesser penalty for good
16 cause.

17 **(3) AS TO A VIOLATION OF § 13-218(E)(2) OR § 13-248 OF THIS TITLE,**
18 **THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENTITY OR OTHER PERSON THAT COMMITTED THE**
19 **VIOLATION SHALL PAY A CIVIL PENALTY THAT EQUALS \$1,000 PLUS THE AMOUNT**
20 **OF THE DISBURSEMENT MADE WITHOUT THE REQUIRED APPROVAL.**

21 (f) (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection, a civil penalty
22 imposed under this section shall be paid by the campaign finance entity.

23 (2) If the campaign finance entity has insufficient funds with which to pay
24 the full amount of the civil penalty in a timely manner, after the campaign account of the
25 finance entity is exhausted the balance of the civil penalty is the joint and several liability
26 of the responsible officers.

27 (3) If a violation is committed by a person not acting on behalf of, or at the
28 request or suggestion of, a candidate or a campaign finance entity, the civil penalty shall
29 be paid by the person who committed the violation.

30 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
31 January 1, 2027.