SB 902

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 902 (Senator Brooks)
Education, Energy, and the Environment

General Assembly - Home Security System Expenses - Campaign Funds and Reimbursement

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This bill allows members of the General Assembly to use campaign funds and/or seek reimbursement from the General Assembly for up to $1,000 of personal expenses for a home security system (with the $1,000 limit applying separately to use of campaign funds and to reimbursement by the General Assembly).

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase, beginning as early as FY 2027, to the extent members of the General Assembly seek reimbursement for costs of home security systems (limited to $1,000 per member, per term), as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Campaign Fund Disbursement for Home Security System Expenses

The campaign finance entity of a member of the General Assembly may make a disbursement from a campaign account to reimburse the member for expenses incurred for the acquisition, installation, maintenance, or upgrade of a home security system used at the member’s primary place of residence if the member submits proof of the completed work during the member’s term of office.

A campaign finance entity that makes such a disbursement must (1) submit to the State Board of Elections (SBE) proof of the disbursement and the proof of the completed work that was submitted to the campaign finance entity and (2) maintain a receipt for the disbursement. A disbursement may not be (1) for more than $1,000 during the member's term of office or (2) made more than once during an election cycle. SBE may audit the disbursement, and a disbursement may not be construed to be an expenditure for the purposes of State campaign finance law (Title 13 of the Election Law Article).

General Assembly Reimbursement for Home Security System Expenses

A member of the General Assembly who expends personal funds on the acquisition, installation, maintenance, or upgrade of a home security system used at the member's primary place of residence may be reimbursed by the General Assembly for the expenditure. To be reimbursed, the member must submit to the General Assembly proof of (1) the expenditure of personal funds and (2) the work that was completed. A member of the General Assembly may not be reimbursed (1) for more than $1,000 during the member's term of office or (2) more than once during the member's term of office.

Current Law:

"Expenditure" under State Campaign Finance Law

Under State campaign finance law, "expenditure" means a gift, transfer, disbursement, or promise of money or a thing of value by or on behalf of a campaign finance entity to (1) promote or assist in the promotion of the success or defeat of a candidate, political party, question, or prospective question at an election; (2) pay expenses associated with contesting an election; or (3) pay for the publication expense of a legislative newsletter.

State Board of Elections Regulations

Pursuant to SBE regulations, a political committee may only make expenditures that are for an electoral purpose. The regulations prohibit specified expenditures of campaign funds, including expenditures for the personal use or the personal benefit of a candidate, the candidate's family, or any other individual. The regulations define "electoral purpose" as an action that promotes or enhances the success or defeat of a candidate, a political party, or a question in an election and would not have occurred but for the existence of the candidacy, political party, or question. It includes actions that increase the visibility or viability of a candidate, political party, or question, such as (1) appearing on campaign material of a political or advocacy committee or organization or (2) attending charitable or political events.

Campaign Finance Entities and Reporting

Unless otherwise expressly authorized by law, all campaign finance activity for an election under the Election Law Article must be conducted through a campaign finance entity (defined as a political committee established under Title 13 of the Election Law Article). An individual may not file a certificate of candidacy or a declaration of intent until the individual establishes, or causes to be established, an authorized candidate campaign committee (a campaign finance entity authorized by the candidate to promote the candidate's candidacy). For each election in which a campaign finance entity participates, it generally must file campaign finance reports at various times prior to and after the primary and general elections, as well as an annual report. The reports must contain information required by SBE with respect to all contributions received and all expenditures made by or on behalf of the campaign finance entity during a reporting period.

State Fiscal Effect: General fund expenditures increase, beginning as early as fiscal 2027, to the extent that members of the General Assembly seek reimbursement from the General Assembly for personal spending on the acquisition, installation, maintenance, or upgrade of a home security system at their primary place of residence. The extent to which general fund expenditures increase cannot be reliably estimated, but any expenditures are limited under the bill to not more than $1,000 per member (of 188 total members of the General Assembly), per four-year term. The bill also authorizes the use of up to $1,000 of campaign funds for those expenses, which may reduce or limit the extent to which members seek reimbursement from the General Assembly.

SBE can audit affected campaign finance accounts with existing resources.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 978 (Delegate Mireku-North) - Government, Labor, and Elections.

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

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