



Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

BILL ANALYSIS



Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986

Senate Bill 661 (as introduced 10-31-13)
Sponsor: Senator Arlan Meekhof
Committee: Local Government and Elections

Date Completed: 11-6-13

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Campaign Finance Act to do the following:

- **Require a committee to file campaign statements in July and October of a year in which there was no election for the candidate the committee was supporting or opposing.**
- **Double the maximum contributions to a candidate or political party caucus committee allowed during an election cycle, and require the Secretary of State (SOS) to adjust the contribution limits for inflation every four years.**
- **Reduce the amount of contributions an independent committee may make to a candidate committee from 10 times, to five times, the amount that a person other than an independent or political party committee may contribute.**

Campaign Statement Filing

Under the Act, a committee, other than an independent committee or a political committee required to file with the Secretary of State, supporting or opposing a candidate must file complete campaign statements as required by the Act and rules promulgated under it. A preelection statement must be filed by the 11th day before an election, with a closing day of the 16th day before the election. A postelection statement also must be filed within 30 days after the election, with a closing date of the 20th day after the election.

Under the bill, in a year in which there was no election for the candidate the committee was supporting or opposing, statements also would have to be filed as follows:

- By July 25 with a closing date of July 20 of that year.
- By October 25 with a closing date of October 20 of that year.

Contribution Limits

Under Section 52, except as otherwise provided, a person other than an independent committee or a political party committee may not make contributions to a candidate committee that, with respect to an election cycle, are more than the following:

- \$3,400 for a candidate for State elective office other than the office of State legislator, or for a candidate for local elective office if the district from which he or she is seeking office has a population of more than 250,000.

- \$1,000 for a candidate for State senator, or for a candidate for local elective office if the district from which he or she is seeking office has a population of more than 85,000 but not more than 250,000.
- \$500 for a candidate for State representative, or for a candidate for local elective office if the district from which he or she is seeking office has a population of 85,000 or less.

The bill would increase these amounts to \$6,800, \$2,000, and \$1,000, respectively.

Section 52a prohibits a person from making contributions to a House or Senate political party caucus committee that exceed \$20,000 in a calendar year. A political party caucus committee or a treasurer or agent of the committee may not accept a contribution with respect to a two-year election cycle that exceeds this amount. The bill would increase the limit to \$40,000.

Under Section 69(1), except as otherwise provided, a person other than an independent committee or a political party committee may not make contributions to a candidate committee that are more than \$3,400 in value for an election cycle. The bill would increase this amount to \$6,800.

Beginning January 1, 2019, and every four years after that, the bill would require the SOS to adjust the dollar value contribution limits provided in Sections 52, 52a, and 69(1) by comparing the percentage increase or decrease in the Detroit consumer price index (CPI) for the preceding August by the corresponding CPI four years earlier. The SOS would have to multiply that percentage change by the amounts prescribed in the Act, and round up each dollar value adjustment to the nearest \$25. The SOS would have to announce the adjustments by December 15 of each year.

Independent Committee Limits

The Act prohibits an independent committee from making contributions to a candidate committee that for an election cycle are more than 10 times the amount permitted a person other than an independent committee or political party committee under Section 69(1). This limit does not apply to contributions that are part of one or more bundled contributions delivered to the committee of a candidate for statewide elective office and that are attributed to the independent committee as prescribed in the Act.

An independent committee may not make contributions to a committee of a candidate for statewide elective office that are part of one or more bundled contributions delivered to that candidate committee, that are attributed to the independent committee, and that, in the aggregate for that election cycle, are more than 10 times the amount permitted a person other than an independent or political party committee.

In both cases, the bill would reduce this contribution limit to five times the amount permitted a person other than an independent or political party committee.

MCL 169.233

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.