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S.P. 814

In Senate, December 5, 2025

An Act to Update the Campaign Finance Laws

(EMERGENCY)

Submitted by the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Received by the Secretary of the Senate on December 3, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DAREK M. GRANT".

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec.

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the changes in this legislation may directly impact statewide campaigns during the 2026 election; and

Whereas, it is necessary to amend the requirements of certain campaign finance laws as soon as possible to avoid undue burdens and confusion; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §1017, sub-§2, ¶D, as amended by PL 2019, c. 323, §7, is further amended to read:

D. If the candidate has an opponent who is on the ballot or who is a declared write-in candidate, any single contribution of \$1,000 \$10,000 or more received or any single expenditure of \$1,000 \$10,000 or more made after the 14th day before the election and more than 24 48 hours before 11:59 p.m. on the day of the election must be reported within 24 48 hours of that contribution or expenditure. The candidate or treasurer is not required to include in this report expenditures for overhead expenses or compensation paid to an employee or other member of the campaign staff who has received payments at regular intervals that have been disclosed in previously filed campaign finance reports. As used in this paragraph, "overhead expenses" includes, but is not limited to, rent, utility payments, taxes, insurance premiums or similar administrative expenses.

Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §1017, sub-§3-A, ¶C, as amended by PL 2019, c. 323, §8, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

C. If the candidate has an opponent who is on the ballot or who is a declared write-in candidate, any single contribution received or any single expenditure made after the 14th day before any election and more than 48 hours before 11:59 p.m. on the day of any election that is equal to or greater than the following thresholds must be reported within 48 hours of that contribution or expenditure:

- (1) For a candidate for State Senator, \$5,000;
- (2) For a candidate for county office, \$2,500;
- (3) For a candidate for State Representative, \$2,000; and
- (4) For a candidate for municipal office, \$2,000.

The candidate or treasurer is not required to include in this report expenditures for overhead expenses or compensation paid to an employee or other member of the campaign staff who has received payments at regular intervals that have been disclosed in previously filed campaign finance reports. As used in this paragraph, "overhead expenses" includes, but is not limited to, rent, utility payments, taxes, insurance premiums or similar administrative expenses.

Sec. 3. 21-A MRSA §1017-A, sub-§4-A, ¶E, as amended by PL 2019, c. 323, §12, is further amended to read:

E. If a state party committee is required to file a report 11 days before an election pursuant to paragraph B or C, the committee shall report any single contribution of \$5,000 \$10,000 or more received or any single expenditure of \$1,000 \$2,500 or more made after the 14th day before the election and more than 24 48 hours before 5:00 p.m. on the day of the election within 24 48 hours of that contribution or expenditure. The committee is not required to include in this report expenditures for overhead expenses or compensation paid to an employee or other member of the campaign staff who has received payments at regular intervals that have been disclosed in previously filed campaign finance reports. As used in this paragraph, "overhead expenses" includes, but is not limited to, rent, utility payments, taxes, insurance premiums or similar administrative expenses.

Sec. 4. 21-A MRSA §1017-A, sub-§4-B, ¶C, as amended by PL 2019, c. 323, §13, is further amended to read:

C. A committee shall report any single contribution of \$5,000 \$10,000 or more received or any expenditure of \$1,000 \$2,500 or more made after the 14th day before a general or special election and more than 24 48 hours before 11:59 p.m. on the day of the election within 24 48 hours of that contribution or expenditure. The committee is not required to include in this report expenditures for overhead expenses or compensation paid to an employee or other member of the campaign staff who has received payments at regular intervals that have been disclosed in previously filed campaign finance reports. As used in this paragraph, "overhead expenses" includes, but is not limited to, rent, utility payments, taxes, insurance premiums or similar administrative expenses.

Sec. 5. 21-A MRSA §1019-B, sub-§4, as amended by IB 2023, c. 4, §3, is further amended to read:

4. Report required; content; rules. A person, party committee or political action committee that makes any independent expenditure in excess of \$250 \$1,000 during any one candidate's election shall file a report with the commission. In the case of a municipal election, the report must be filed with the municipal clerk.

A. A report required by this subsection must be filed with the commission according to a reporting schedule that the commission shall establish by rule that takes into consideration existing campaign finance reporting requirements. Rules adopted pursuant to this paragraph are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

B. A report required by this subsection must contain an itemized account of the total contributions from each contributor, each expenditure in excess of ~~\$250~~ \$1,000 in any one candidate's election, the date and purpose of each expenditure and the name of each payee or creditor. The report must state whether the expenditure is in support of or in opposition to the candidate and must include, under penalty of unsworn falsification, as provided in Title 17-A, section 453, a statement whether the expenditure is made in cooperation, consultation or concert with, or at the request or suggestion of, the candidate or an authorized committee or agent of the candidate.

1 C. A report required by this subsection must be on a form prescribed and prepared by
2 the commission. A person filing this report may use additional pages if necessary, but
3 the pages must be the same size as the pages of the form. The commission may adopt
4 procedures requiring the electronic filing of an independent expenditure report, as long
5 as the commission adopts an exception for persons who lack access to the required
6 technology or the technological ability to file reports electronically.

7 **Sec. 6. 21-A MRSA §1059, sub-§2, ¶E**, as amended by PL 2019, c. 323, §24, is
8 further amended to read:

9 E. If a committee is required to file a report 11 days before an election pursuant to
10 paragraph B or C, the committee shall report any single contribution of ~~\$5,000~~ \$10,000
11 or more received or single expenditure of ~~\$1,000~~ \$2,500 or more made after the 14th
12 day before the election and more than ~~24~~ 48 hours before 5:00 p.m. on the day of the
13 election within ~~24~~ 48 hours of that contribution or expenditure. The treasurer is not
14 required to include in this report expenditures for overhead expenses or compensation
15 paid to an employee or other member of the campaign staff who has received payments
16 at regular intervals that have been disclosed in previously filed campaign finance
17 reports. As used in this paragraph, "overhead expenses" includes, but is not limited to,
18 rent, utility payments, taxes, insurance premiums or similar administrative expenses.

19 **Sec. 7. Rules.** The Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices shall
20 amend its rules to provide that independent expenditures made during the 60 days before
21 an election must be disclosed in a report within 2 calendar days of the expenditure.

22 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation
23 takes effect when approved.

24 SUMMARY

25 This bill amends campaign finance laws as follows:

- 26 1. It increases the threshold amounts for financial transactions that require candidates,
27 political action committees, ballot question committees and party committees to file
28 24-hour reports during the last 13 days before an election;
- 29 2. It extends the deadline for 24-hour reports so that the reports are due within 48 hours
30 of the contribution or expenditure;
- 31 3. It increases the threshold amount that requires an independent expenditure report
32 from spending in excess of \$250 to advocate for or against a candidate to spending in excess
33 of \$1,000 per candidate; and
- 34 4. It directs the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices to amend
35 its rules to provide that independent expenditures made during the 60 days before an
36 election must be disclosed in a report within 2 calendar days of the expenditure.