

Government Administration and Elections Committee  
Public Hearing  
Monday, March 10, 2014

S.B. No. 384 AN ACT CONCERNING MULTIPLE CONTRIBUTIONS BY A SINGLE CONTRIBUTOR TO A TOWN COMMITTEE. (GAE)

Written Testimony for:  
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Co-Chairs: Senator Musto and Representative Jutila, members of the Committee:  
Thank you for the opportunity to testify here this afternoon. I am here to speak in support of S.B. 384 – An Act Concerning Multiple Contributions by a Single Contributor to a Town Committee.

I first spoke with members of the General Assembly about the duplicative and burdensome effect current law has on Town Committee Treasurers two years ago – shortly after I was elected by my Town Committee to serve as Treasurer. Unlike many Town Committee Treasurers, I knew what I was getting myself into – and still agreed to put up my name for the position.

I have served, and continue to serve as the Treasurer for the Manchester DTC for over three years. I managed a State Senate campaign in 2012 – starting with qualifying the candidate for their public financing grant. I managed individual municipal campaigns over the years; and as Treasurer for the DTC, ran finances for two election cycles of slate campaign committees.

As you all are aware, the Town Committee Treasurer is not paid for their services. We are though held personally – financially – legally – responsible to maintain records of all donations and expenditures for the Committee and file complete periodic reports to the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC). If we miss a report or there are errors in our reports, we, not the Committee, are held responsible and pay the fine. We take this responsibility seriously.

This Bill will not change any reporting requirements for Town Committees. Treasurers will still be required, each quarter and prior to primaries and general elections, to file the same report with the same information on donors and expenditures with the SEEC that we will file every year.

What this Bill will do is release us from chasing down Donor Certification Forms from repeat donors when we previously collected a form within the same calendar year.

Treasurers will still be responsible for collecting a Donor Certification form from every donor at the time of the initial donation in a calendar year. What will change is that for

any subsequent donation by the same individual, the Treasurer will not be required to collect an additional form.

As Treasurer, I maintain a detailed database for all donors and volunteers much like many non-profit organizations or foundations. It retains names, addresses, contact information, employer and occupation info AND a record of every dollar donated and spent since 2010. This program also allows me to run a report and upload the data directly to the Campaign Reporting Information System (eCRIS).

Even if a Town Committee Treasurer keeps handwritten ledgers and inputs information manually to the eCRIS system; after a donor is entered once in a calendar year, eCRIS will store the information – including employer, occupation, and aggregate donations for the year. The Treasurer need only search the donor's name and enter the date and amount of any subsequent donation.

To put this in perspective, let me give you some basic numbers covering just 2013 for my DTC:

Last year, the Manchester DTC received more than 625 distinct donations from approximately 400 individuals. Of these, roughly 100 donors had multiple donations for the year. That means 100 donors with an average of 3.25 donations each. With the most donations from a single individual topping out at 12 donations, there were at least another 5 to 8 individuals who donated more than seven times.

The vast majority of the individuals who had multiple donations to the DTC were members, or past members, of the Town Committee. They are known entities. Their information rarely changes.

Town Committees across the state are in the same situation – more so for smaller towns where their donor universe is not as large. It is my contention that once a Treasurer collects the initial donor certification form from an individual donor in a calendar year; they should not have to collect the same information over and over again within the same calendar year.