

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-499

AN ACT CONCERNING CONTRIBUTIONS UNDER CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Title: LAWS.

Vote Date: 3/23/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/19/2018

File No.: 486

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill seeks to provide more transparency to those giving smaller contributions to political campaigns. It requires the disclosure of contributions of \$50.00 or less from individuals to the same disclosure requirements to the laws regarding larger contributions from individuals. It also expands the current contribution exemption for the sale of food or beverages, up to a cumulative total of \$50.00 sold by town committees to an individual at a town fair, local festival, or similar mass gathering to include parking at these gatherings, subject to the cumulative total.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Michael Brandi, Executive Director, General Counsel, State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC)

Mr. Brandi explains that SB 499 requires the disclosure and itemization of all contributions, regardless of amount, to certain candidate and exploratory committees, certain political committees and all party committees, and exempts from the definition of "contribution" payment, not exceeding fifty dollars, to a town committee for parking at a fair, festival or other similar mass gathering. He believes that the bill seems to have contradictory effects on disclosure by committees. Mr. Brandi explains that, "on the one hand, adding another exception for town committees for fundraising allows more funds to flow into the committees' treasuries without their source being disclosed. On the other hand, requiring disclosure of every contribution, no matter how small, would represent a significant change to the law, and have a significant impact and increased burden on the treasurers of town committees,

especially. Think of five dollar raffle tickets or ten dollar tickets to spaghetti dinners. It would, however, greatly increase the disclosure of small dollar contributors.” He cautions the Committee that these latter changes, in particular, should not be made without careful consideration of the consequences upon the regulated community.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

Reported by: Susan Tufts

Date: 4/12/18